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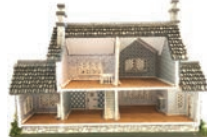
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WELCOME



It's the holiday time of the year. Lot's of cheer to be had no matter what is going on in the world.

One of the main reasons I love creating so much is that I know with each brush stroke or sculpt of the clay I am making this world a more beautiful place. I hope you all have been talking some time to create. Even if it is an hour a day it's good for the soul to visit your happy place and meditate.

I have been making Christmas elves to get myself into the holiday spirit. We would love to know what you have been making! This issue is full of fun ideas and gorgeous projects. Elize van Es puts a fresh spin on a winter sled, Cecile Richardson shares a beautiful dollhouse she has completed and so many others have great things to share, plus wonderful tips and tricks of the trade.

Enjoy the sparkle and joy during this time of year and even if your not building, you can always take some time to decorate your favorite dollhouse or scene. After all, if your not playing with your miniatures than why have them? Aren't we so lucky to still have the joy of a child in our hearts?

After reviewing each issue my heart is full knowing there are so many that share my love for this art form. We are a special bunch and have a lot to give to the world. So don't stop creating and be sure to share your projects with those around you!

Auralea Krieger, Editor
auralea@ashdown.co.uk

REGULARS

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Mini booth

Make a booth for the kitchen table

BY RANDALL CASTLE

My Bibi (Grandma) needed a booth in her kitchen. My human is showing how they made theirs but you can change the dimensions to suit your own space.

1 From mat board, cut out 2 seat sides from the template. Then cut a 5" x 3 1/2" and a 4" x 3 1/2" piece for the back.

2 Glue the seat sides to the side of each piece.

3 Determine the height you want your seat to be and cut a 1/4" strip of mat board and glue it on the backs (mine is 1 1/4" from floor). Leave 1/4" or so



open in the corner where the back corner will meet.

4 Cut 2 pieces of mat board, 1 3/6" deep by 1 1/4" tall. These will be seat supports.

5 Cut out a small notch for the strip to fit into.

6 Glue the backs together in the corner to make the booth.

7 Cut a bench seat piece to 1 9/16" x 5" and the shorter bench seat 1 9/16" deep by the space that is left (to get a snug fit). Glue

them on the wall strips and the seat supports.

8 Cut and glue the front strips under the bench against the supports. Glue a card stock strip over the seat at the corner.

9 Take measurements for the your cushions cut from cardboard. Be sure to leave room for the fabric thickness.

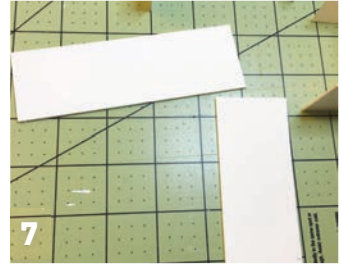
10 Glue foam onto cardboard then wrap fabric over and glue to back. Do the same for the booth back cushions.

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Mat board
- Cutting knife
- Wood glue
- Tacky Glue
- Fabric
- Foam
- Cereal box
- Scissors

PROJECT



11 Glue the cushions in to the booth.

The table was made from a decorative piece of wood found at the craft store and a piece of basswood. You can make or purchase a small bench for the other

side of the table or add two kitchen chairs.

My human hooked you up, right? Come on over to [@randall_castle](#) on Instagram and get to know me and my crew. We would dig it if you joined in on our daily adventures. Looking

forward to seeing you there. Peace out!

Pattern:



MINI MAIL

■ AM is your magazine, and we want to hear from you. Write to: MiniMail, American Miniaturist, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. Or email: auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Letters may be edited if necessary.

★ Star letter

My family had decided to escape the confines of the quarantine and explore nature and breathe in the fresh air. It was then that I saw a hole along the trail, partially hidden by some roots and exposed by erosion. The next hole was between some rocks. Everywhere I looked on the rest of the hike, my eyes noticed perfect little places for tiny

Thank you

I went to the mail box and found the first hard copy issue of *AM* to arrive since the Covid lock down. I have been checking them out online but nothing beats a hard copy. Thank you so much for making many of us so happy. It is like having an old friend back again. I love you all and what you do for us creative people. So glad to have you back. So many businesses have shut down during this pandemic. I am really glad you are not one of them. Take care my friends and pass on virtual hugs to everyone involved.

Lorna from Canada



little scenes and The Rocky Mountain Littles were born.

For the rest of summer, I planned our hikes carefully, to fit certain miniatures scenes. Having been a creator and collector for over 40 years, I borrowed pieces from various dollhouses or dug through boxes of minis for the perfect pieces.



The scenes were initially focused around coffee or tea with sweet treats, but when we hiked near a mining area, it changed to a Rocky Mountain mining scene. When we camped the mini scene had a campfire with mini s'mores and fishing.

As summer passed I realized that something about waterfalls captured my attention and the falls series were created. One trail took us to what seemed like the top of the world, perfect for finding a lost treasure! This project took planning. It was a whimsical way to combine my love of minis with my love of the outdoors. Over the course of summer and at least twenty different scenes, I did loose a tiny silver bucket when it fell into a hole out of reach, and one miniature teddy bear when I knocked it into the swift current near a waterfall.

One chipmunk actually ran through a flower shop scene



and one windy day we had to chase tiny papers through a boulder field.

The 2020 Pandemic was not a normal summer by any means, but it was filled with magic by the calling of miniatures and creation of the Rocky Mountain Littles.

Kristi from Longmont, CO

Award winning house

My Dad entered the Florida state fair with a 1:12 scale farmhouse he built from a memory and then took the grand award and overall Best in Show!

During the Covid 19 lock down he made another incredible dollhouse. It was an exact replica of the house my Great Aunt grew up in the 1920s in Illinois. She wouldn't live to see the grand award



ribbon presented at the state fair, as she was at that same moment under hospice care and would pass away 1 day prior to the announcement, but we believe she knows. My Mom does the decorating and all the dollhouses are now decorated for Fall/Halloween.

Carrie from Port Orange, FL



A foodie's dream come true

Miniature food artist Melissa Jackson strives for ultimate realism in her art

BY DEB WEISSLER

As a self-proclaimed foodie, Melissa is the first to admit she plans her days around what she is going to eat! So it's only natural that her desire for comfort food should spill over into her miniatures. "Each piece has been inspired by my daily food cravings," Melissa laughs. "I like to focus on comfort foods, at the same time adding color to my pieces to make them not only realistic but whimsi-

cal as well. I've always had a love/hate relationship with food and confess I have a child's palate. I adore anything artificial, cheesy and sugary; anything that would give most folks a tummy ache." She even named the family cat Bleu Cheese!

What sounds a bit self-deprecating becomes apparent when one considers how Melissa spends her days. As a hospital Sterile Processing Tech, putting in extra hours at a hospital in Vancouver, WA during the pandemic

hasn't been easy. "Working in a hospital, and dealing with the fears of COVID-19 has been trying to say the least. I'm thankful I have an outlet with my miniatures, and know I have a place where I can escape for a few hours."

Fortunately, Melissa has been exposed to a lifetime of miniatures to sustain and inspire her. Her mother was a

Below left: Miniature artist Melissa Jackson. **Below:** Carry out sushi in 1:12 scale. **Right:** A variety of 1:12 scale foods that all look good enough to eat.



MINIATURE FOOD



Right: A Mexican meal in miniature that looks real enough to make your mouth water.

miniature artist who built a business making miniature jointed teddy bears that she sold in gift shops along the coast. Sadly, illness deprived her of her dream career, but the same bug that bit her years before found a willing replacement in her daughter.

Melissa recalls the tiny village her mom made for her brother's micro-machine cars. Whenever he wasn't at home, Melissa would sneak into his bedroom and play with it to her heart's content. It took years for him to discover who was responsible for all those broken pieces!

Always at work on some sort of art project, Melissa's venture into miniature foods did not begin until last year. The first thing she tackled was a glistening pan of fried



eggs. With no formal art training, she was surprised when they turned out so realistically and impressed her supportive husband after just the first attempt. Looking back on that first project, she realizes just how far her art

has progressed since.

Like any good miniature artist, "a lot of patience and time is given to each sculpted piece, and studying a real life picture or even what I have sitting in my fridge and cabinets, gives me a better understanding of how each piece should appear from any angle," Melissa explains. "I like to handcraft each piece out of polymer clay then display them on a ceramic plate or bowl. It's a lot of trial and error. If something turns out better than expected, awesome! If not, let's try it again. I try not to get too discouraged if



Left: Bagels with cream cheese and fresh grapes in 1:12 scale!



something doesn't turn out the way I expected."

Presentation is everything! She strives for ultimate realism, adding bite marks and crumbs and leaving bits of food stuck on the serving utensils. "Being able to see each piece in its finished form and ready for display in a dollhouse is so exciting! I can stare at my miniatures all day and pick out new details in my work I never noticed prior to baking. I sometimes use resin for syrups and milk to give a more glossy appearance and resemblance to the real thing."

Once Melissa is satisfied



with the results, she shows it off to her mother-in-law, Jackie. Without fail, she wants one of her own and is constantly bragging to others about her creative daughter-in-law. "I love how she has stepped into the role my mom could no longer

‘I cannot wait to have the time to go through my list of food ideas.’

fill. She's become the cheerleader in my life!"

Since Melissa began, several friends and family members have expressed desire to build and furnish a dollhouse, a desire she completely understands. She puts so much love and care into every bite that it's often hard to part with some of them, so she has started making extras

for her own room box she plans to decorate some day.

Working primarily with polymer clay, charcoals, acrylic paints and resin, Melissa admits she just couldn't live without tinfoil. Rolled up into various shapes and sizes, it creates a multitude of uniquely realistic patterns on the surface of the clay. She relies on it for her hamburger buns and cakes. Living in the humid Pacific Northwest, polymer clay offers a sticky challenge as it wants to cling to every tool. After hours of work, her eyes tend to cross and it's time to clean up. Like many miniature artists, she often finds her work has migrated from her office/art studio to the kitchen island, the coffee table, or anywhere else she happens to perch.

Melissa's love for miniatures extends beyond her

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own creations. “I love how so much detail can be packed into such tiny pieces. I still get goosebumps when I see a miniature that is perfect in every aspect. My most recent

goosebumps moment was a 1:12-scale Keurig and coffee pod set I saw on-line. It literally looked like it’s full size version in every detail.”

With Covid-19 cases on

the rise again, Melissa will have little time to grow her business; something she’s just dying to do. “I plan on expanding my miniature creations along with becoming the go-to for other miniatures such as furniture and tableware, among others. I cannot wait to have the time to go through my list

“I always welcome a challenge and would love to do commission pieces for customers.”

of food ideas. It’s literally 3 pages long now.

I am one that takes on too many projects at once. I have been going to school for writing, and have been working on my own novel. I always welcome a challenge and would love to do commission pieces for customers. If they have a particular vision that they can’t find in my shop, I would be more than happy to make their dream project come true.”



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Padded armchair

A comfy armchair with a vintage style

BY JOYCE MORI

I needed to have furniture for several of my unfinished scenes. Sound familiar? I could not find what I wanted so I decided to make my own. I studied a chair made by Freida Gray. I made one of the chairs and it looked nice. Using the concept of the balsa wood base I created my own chair based on a chair I have in the studio where I work. I was so pleased with the result I made several with variations in fabric. By making your own furniture you can use fabric to match perfectly the paint and wallpaper of your room or scene.

Please read all the directions and study the photos

before beginning. You will want to apply the glue thinly for this project. You do not want it to bleed through the fabric. Always remove as much extra bulk of fabric as you safely can when gluing the fabric.

1 Cut a piece of your fabric on the bias and 5/8" wide x 12". Place a thin layer of glue on the wrong side of the fabric and lay the wire in the center of it. Fold the fabric over the wire and press the fabric together. Do a few inches at a time until you have the length of the wire done.

2 Use a toothpick and push against the wire

Materials:

Scale = 1:12

- 1/2" thick balsa: Cut two – 1 3/4" wide x 1 7/8" deep for the seat.
- 5/16" thick balsa: Cut two – 1 1/2" high x 1 7/8" deep for the sides (arms). Cut one – 2 3/8" high x 2 1/4" wide for the back.
- Thin fabric covered floral wire – you need 12"
- Fat quarter of 100% cotton. It's best to not use a plaid for your first piece as matching can be tedious.
- Tacky Glue
- Thin card – cereal box
- Thin batting or fleece type batting. A 10" square is more than sufficient. In some steps, layers of batting are glued together to make a thicker batting. If you have scraps of thicker batting, use them instead of gluing layers.
- Old scissors for cutting fabric covered wire
- 4 beads for chair legs



on both sides so the wire appears in relief. This forms the trim piping. You could substitute pearl cotton or bunka but the piping in matching fabric provides a realistic look to the furniture.



3 Cut two strips of fabric 1 1/4" wide by 3". Glue a strip of fabric to the front and slightly onto each side edge of each seat piece. Longest dimension is the depth of the chair. Glue excess fabric to the top and bottom of each seat section. Press all glued edges as flat as possible on the top and bottom of each seat section.

4 Glue a piece of piping on the top of the bottom seat. This is glued at the front and slightly into the sides for about 1/4". Cut a slit in the fabric at the corner bend to make it lay flat.

Remove a little excess fabric. The wire piping extends just slightly beyond the edges of the base so

that when the top seat is glued on top of this, the wire is over the edge and out of the way of the seat.

5 Glue the two seat pieces together. I use clamps to hold the two pieces together.

6 Notice that an angle is cut at the back of the chair seat to allow the back of the chair to recline back. Cut this angle. The drawing below shows how to cut the angle. On future chairs you can alter this angle by modifying your cut on the base. This angle can create new chair styles.

7 Glue a piece of batting to the front of each side

piece (arms). Use a 1 1/4" wide piece of fabric that is about 2 1/4" long and glue this fabric over the batting.

8 Glue one side to the chair seat. Each side is set back 1/8" from the front of the chair. Back of side goes beyond the seat. Trim the side to follow the angle of the seat. Repeat this step for the second side. Cut the angle on that side piece.

9 Glue piping around the front on the outside edges of the chair sides. The piping should go under the bottom of the side to where it touches the base and then over the top of the arm and down to touch the seat of the chair.



10 Test fit the back to the angle of the chair. Don't worry that the bottom of the chair back does not have an angle on the bottom to match the side.

11 Glue the back to the chair. Glue thin layer of batting around the top and sides of the chair back. Then take $11\frac{1}{4}'' \times 8\frac{3}{4}''$ piece of fabric and glue it over the batting as you did for the chair sides. Be sure a little goes under to the chair bottom. You may need to trim the length.

12 Cut a piece of card that fits the outside of each chair side. No pattern is provided. Each chair will vary slightly and so it is better to trace the pattern

based on your chair and then cut it as needed. The card should be slightly smaller on all sides than the actual size of the chair side. This is because the thickness of the fabric that will be glued to it will increase its size slightly.

13 Cut a piece of fabric approx. $\frac{1}{2}''$ larger at the top, bottom and front than the card. Have the fabric $\frac{3}{4}''$ larger on the back. Glue the top and front of the fabric to the card. Glue this card to the side of the chair. The back and bottom fabric is wrapped to the back and bottom and then glued in place. Be sure the edge of the front of the card is just behind the piping. You do not want to cover the piping.

14 Glue four layers of thin batting together for each arm rest. These are going to be like little pillows. Each piece is $1\frac{7}{8}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$. The four layers should be about $1''$ thick. If you use a thin fleece type batting, use only two layers and it will be just under $\frac{1}{4}''$ thick. The difference between the two types of batting in terms of thickness required has to do with how much the batting will flatten.

15 Make a fabric sleeve for each arm rest by cutting two pieces of fabric $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4\frac{3}{4}''$. Fold the rectangle in half across the width of the long side, right sides together. This gives a rectangle $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{3}{8}''$. Sew the side seams with a $\frac{1}{4}''$ seam. Trim the corners and turn right side out.

16 Put a batting bundle in each fabric sleeve. Make sure that the batting does not bunch up after it has been put in the



sleeve. This will take a little manipulation and using tweezers will help. The open end should have about 1/2" where there is no batting. Glue the open end shut.

17 Glue three pieces of batting (2 1/4" x 1 1/4") together to make the batting for the stuffed neck rest. If you use fleece, the same situation applies as for the arm rests. Cut a piece of fabric 2 3/4" x 4". Sew this together as you did for the arm rest. Complete the neck rest as you did an arm rest.

18 Cut a piece of card for the front side of the chair back. You have to cut out the "T" shape. Round off a tiny bit at the two top corners. Cover the front of this with fabric. You want the fabric to fold over the back of the card about 1/8" to 1/4". Do not have it fold over at the bottom edge. It

can be even with the card as this will be covered with the seat cushion. Trim excess at the corners as needed. Glue this to the back. Glue the arm rests in place. Glue the neck rest to the chair.

19 Measure the seat cushion area and cut four pieces of batting slightly smaller than that dimension. If you are using fleece, cut only two layers. Glue the layers together. Cut a piece of fabric large enough so you can wrap the stack of cushion batting pieces. I leave about 3/4" on all sides. Glue the fabric to the batting. Glue the sides first and then the front/back. You do not need to cover the underside. Glue the cushion to the chair seat.

20 Cut a piece of card for the chair back. Cut a piece of fabric 1/2" larger than the card on all sides. Glue the fabric to the card at the top and the side. Leave the bottom of the fabric unglued to the card so it can be wrapped over to the bottom of the chair. Glue this to the chair back.

21 Cut card for the seat bottom. Cover with fabric as you did previous pieces. Glue to the chair bottom.

22 Glue four pony beads to the bottom of the chair for legs.

Place your finished miniature arm chair in your scene and enjoy all your hard work!



Holiday meal

A modest meal of frog leg soup and squash bread

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

Two sister witches live in my Rik Pierce collaboration house.

One is a good witch and the younger is trying to be a bad witch, but she's not very accomplished. Casually skimming spell books does not a witch make!

For their Thanksgiving dinner the youngest has made a frog soup much to the dismay of her older sister who adores frogs. The eldest made a yummy

squash bread so this may just be all she has for dinner.

If you want more realism you can add as much detail as you like to your frog legs. I made the pot and bowls with polymer clay and painted them. If you have premade dishes be sure they are not plastic because they will melt in the toaster oven. Clay, ceramic, wood or metal is best.

You can also substitute the frog legs with anything

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Bowls and a pot
- Polymer clay - light cream, green, reddish brown, orange
- Acrylic paint - brownish red
- Pastels - brown, brownish red
- Toothpicks
- Sculpting tools/tile
- Knife
- Glossy Glaze
- Needle tool
- Paint brush

you like. You can also add more vegetables.

These girls have a low budget at the moment. But once they open their Wicca shop things will pick up!

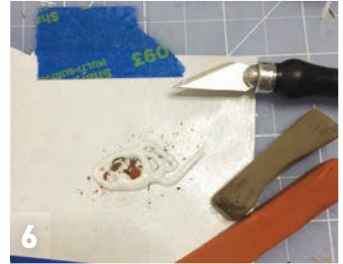
Frog leg soup

1 I painted the base of my bowl in a brown wash to match the sauce with acrylic paint. Probably not really needed, but I did it.

2 Mix some white clay with a light tan and roll out tubes with tapered ends as shown for the legs.

3 Make a bend in the knee area. Then do the





same for the ankle and flatten out the foot.

4 I made tendon indents and webbed feet with a dental tool. This is where you can take more care and add more detail in the leg shape if you like. Study some online photos.

5 Merge the two legs together at the thigh. I also made a few individual frog legs. If you like, you can use a very small brush to add the illusion of 'cooked'

areas to parts of the frog legs (I did not do this step). Just rub the color of pastel you want with your paint brush. A reddish-brown pastel would work. Then gently brush the pastels chalk over the legs here and there (be sure to study some online photos).

6 Mix liquid polymer clay with some pastel dust using a toothpick. You can rub the pastel on paper or scrape with a knife to get a fine powder.

7 Drip some of the mix in the bottom of the bowl. You can do some baking tests if you like to gage the transparency of the sauce.

8 Roll some thin tubes of greenish-yellow clay for spring onions. Flatten with your clay knife. Trim it thinner if needed. Make an indent down the middle. Keep the ends square by cutting them.

9 Lay the frog legs in the bowls and pot then



work in the onions. Cut a few onions in half and tuck them under the legs so they are peaking out.

10 Bake everything based on your clay directions. Let cool.

11 I mixed Ceramcoat Autumn Brown and a Sculpey Glossy Glaze and dripped it with a toothpick over the legs and onions. Let dry. You will be adding layers as it dries because it does shrink.

12 My next layer was clear glaze. I let it dry and then added another mixed version of glaze over that to even everything out so it looks level in the bowl just as real soup would.

Squash bread

13 Mix a polymer clay that is the color of the inside of the bread you want to make.

14 Shape it into baked bread as if it baked over the edges of the pan.

15 Use a small stylus tool or toothpick to make texture on top. Look at real bread while you do this so you can mimic the cracks and texture. Texturize the sides as well.

16 Mix a damp brush with pastel dust and paint the top of your bread. Don't go in the cracks you made. You want that to be lighter to show that it is the inside of the cake.

17 Slice as many pieces off as you wish. Press the clay blade down slowly so you don't squish the bread loaf. Or you can put it in the fridge/freezer for a while and then cut it while it's stiff and cold.

18 Texturize the inside with a needle tool until it looks like cake.

19 Press some aluminum foil around the edge of the cakes top.

20 Bake following your clay instructions.

21 Paint a satin varnish on the top. If the clay bakes darker than you want you can mix some paint and water to make a wash and use a small brush to paint the inside of the cake texture to brighten it up.

Display the cake on a mini cutting board! Be sure to follow my work on Instagram @auraleakrieger!



Discovering 3D portrait art

*Miniature artist Betsey Bradley shares
her 1:12 scale dolls*

In the September/October issue of *Dollhouse Miniatures* we featured miniature artist Betsey Bradley's amazing 1:12 scale dolls and miniature master paintings. We wanted to share a few more of her beautifully made dolls here in *American Miniaturist*.

Betsey paints miniature reproductions of masterpieces as well as commission portrait paintings, but recently she began creating polymer clay dolls. This has become an exciting new variation on her portrait work.

She has taken four doll making classes taught by IGMA artisan Jeanne Rulie. She truly loves making dolls in the classroom setting spending a week with other like-minded adults who also love miniatures. Please enjoy

looking at her art work. We are sure you will be inspired!



GET INTO TOUCH:

Betsey Bradley Art

Betsey Bradley

Email: betseyareno@comcast.net

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MINI DOLLS



Scenery workshop

Join Jeff Winkel in this ongoing workshop

BY JEFF WINKEL

Hi, I'm Jeff Winkel with a "Scenery Workshop" I want to share tips and techniques from 40+ years of scenery modeling. I want to teach you to create your own greenspaces to compliment your dollhouses and dioramas. Give life to your work by adding small touches of nature. Much of what we'll cover can be seen in my latest project, *The Cottage*, featured in *Dollhouse Miniatures* magazine issue 77.

I call my diorama creations Handscapes. In this workshop, you'll create your own Handscape without having to spend a fortune.

You'll produce a step-by-step, layer-by-layer, practice board. Using a practice board eliminates the anxiety of making mistakes. When you're finished, your board should look similar to my finished piece shown.

Before we start, Let's get into the right frame of mind. Please take a look at the photo to the right. Notice the different greens, shadowy areas and recesses.



Branches either raise up, are level or droop. Tops of the trees are irregular and have different shaped leaves.

You can't see leaf details except in the foreground trees. But your eye notices the differences. It's all shape, color and texture.

We will be making Layer 1, which is scrap wood for



Scale = 1:12

Materials:

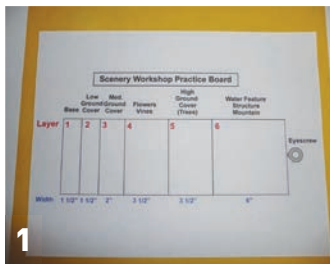
- Pine, plywood or MDF
- Sand paper
- Dust mask, splinter-proof gloves, eye protection
- Water-based paint
- Eye-screw
- Drill with 1/4" to 1/2" dia. bit
- Paintbrushes
- Blue tape
- Ruler
- Styrofoam
- Sharp box cutter
- Foam-glue or hot glue gun
- Rocks and grits
- Newspaper
- Modeling plaster
- Disposable container
- Isopropyl alcohol in spray bottle

the base with some rocks. This is the layer we will complete in this tutorial. Next issues tutorial will be Layer 2, which is low vegetation; dirt, low ground covers, short grasses, scrub and weeds. Then Layer 3 is medium-high vegetation; plants, vines, taller weeds, grasses, and bushes. Layer four is the amazing world of miniature flowers, plants and weeds. Layer 5 is high vegetation; tall bushes, field grass, hedges and trees. Layer 6 will sport a water feature, a small structure and a small mountain.

Layer 1 - the terrain base

1 Select a piece of pine, plywood or MDF (medium density fiberboard) about 18" long, 5"-8" wide and 3/4" to 1" thick. (On an 18" board the 2nd layer will go on 12" of the board, and the 3rd layer on 8 1/2" of the board and so on.

Normally, you start a project with your final picture or story in mind. But, this tutorial is about technique.



After you've learned the scenery steps you can apply what you've learned to tell your story on your next project. We will leave room for a small mountain and a small structure at the back corners. And, we'll create a lower, narrow wiggly space on the board going from the mountain to the other end of the board for a river.

2 Break the edges of the board and sand the base all over. Wrap a piece of medium grit sandpaper (60-100 grit) around a piece of scrap wood or firm sponge. A dust mask, splinter-proof gloves, eye protection, good filtration and ventilation are mandatory.

Bear down and cut down your sanding time. Using sandpaper less than 60

TOPTIP:

Tape 1" thick furnace filters to cover the entire front and back of a box fan to make a simple dust collector and remember to change the filters as needed.



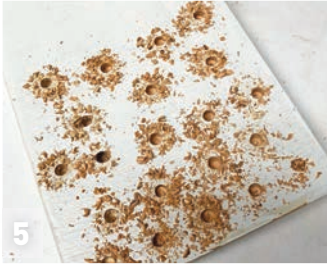
grit may not remove all the splinters and sandpaper greater than 100 grit may prevent materials from bonding to your board. Don't concern yourself with scratches or even grooves on the scenery side.

3 Prepare the board for sealing and sealing the board. Seal the board to prevent warping due to water-based products. You can use left-over latex or acrylic house paint or hobby paint. Water-based paints are easier to clean up and there are no fumes to concern yourself with compared to oil-based paints. Safety, safety, safety.

Screw in an eye-screw to one end of the board to hang your board so you can paint it in one sitting. It's a good idea to drill a pilot hole before trying to screw something into wood to prevent splitting. Only the threads do the gripping.

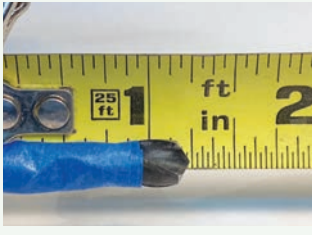
4 Paint all six sides of the board. Let it dry. Put on a second coat.

5 Drill some shallow dimples into the terrain side of the board. Anything from 1/4" to 1/2" diameter will work. Space them an inch apart or so. Don't drill



TOPTIP:

Wrap some tape on your drill bit to show you how deep to drill each dimple.



through, just drill about one quarter-inch deep to anchor the first layer.

This would be the time to drill peg holes in specific places to secure figures, vehicles or structures to the board. You would then stuff a wooden peg into these holes so you can build the scenery layers around the peg-holes without accidentally filling the holes with scenery.

6 If you want, after the board is dry, add feet to the board. Use self-adhesive felt tabs or screw-on feet to raise the board off the table.



7 Use extruded or molded Styrofoam for your small mountain. Get a piece about two to three inches on a side. You can cut foam with a hot wire, a bread knife or a sharp box cutter. If your foam is thin, build up layers to the desired height. You want the base, two sides and the top to be flat. The face of the mountain can be flat or even recessed for the waterfall.

8 Secure the foam to the back corner of your board (nearest the eye-hook) with foam-glue or a low-heat hot glue gun. High heat can melt the foam and release dangerous gases. Your board should now look like 8a.

9 Gather rocks and grits to prepare the 'skin'. Grit can be debris from your gutter, backyard or stream. Even sand will work. A wonderful material to use is colored tile grout. A few neutral colors used



individually or in blends gives you a large palette of shades to choose from. And, remember, almost all the smallest grit and grout will end up being covered. The grit is just to cover the skin you will be applying next.

Real soil works. One of my treasures was finding a

TOPTIP:

Get 4-6 inexpensive embroidery hoops with a diameter of at least 4". Scavenge some nylon leg hose material, window screen, mesh fabric, etc. Make graduated mesh sieves. This is important for grit and small rocks as well as flock and scatter which we will learn about later in this workshop.



seam of superfine, almost dust-like dirt...in my neighbor's yard. With permission, I have a jar or two. Not only is it good to cover bases, it's useful to 'grunge' up an old building or vehicle. You can usually take yard dirt and with a mortar and pestle make your own superfine dirt. Use various mesh materials and sieve your grit. Store the results in labeled containers.

Many ways to make rocks

Rock molds

Use real rocks or plaster rocks from molds. There's a huge selection of rock molds to choose from. If you use a mold, be sure to wet the mold with 'wet water' (water with a few drops of liquid detergent in it). Pour in plaster and there you go...rocks.

Make your own rock molds.

- Select real rocks. Even part of a real rock that has the character you want will work.
- Clean the rocks of all dirt and debris.
- Scrub the rock with a stiff bristle brush and soap and water. Leave the rock wet.
- Brush on a thin layer of liquid latex molding rubber from a hobby store.
- Pop any bubbles with a pin.
- Let the coat extend past

the area you want to mold by a few inches on all sides.

- Let it dry to a tacky level.
- Add a thicker layer of latex and let this dry overnight. Notice the color change for when you can apply additional layers.
- Add another two layers of rubber, allowing each layer to dry overnight.
- Add gauze strips for strength. Overlap strips at least 1/2".
- Finish up with two more layers of rubber.
- Add another layer of gauze strips.
- Add a final one or two layers of rubber.

You now have your own mold and can create your rocks. Peel the mold carefully from the rock by the edges. Store molds so they don't get folded or crushed.

Also, sprinkle a little talcum powder in the mold.

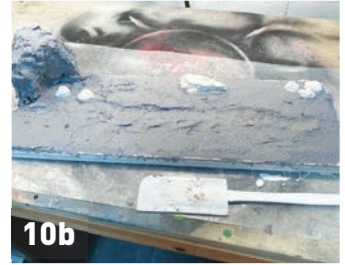
Rocks from foil

You can make your own rocks with aluminum foil. Just crinkle up the foil, open it up and manipulate the foil with gently rounded tools until you get the look you want. Pour in the plaster.

Rock wall

You can make a stacked slate wall by pouring regular plaster 1/16" inch to 1/8" inch thick onto aluminum foil with the edges turned up 1/4" or so. When the plaster is dry, simply break it up in pieces the size that your scale requires. Stack them using plaster, modeling paste or even dry-wall compound as your adhesive. Voila! A beautiful stacked stone fence.





Sanded or glued rocks don't take color well or at all. Rub plaster rocks together to get edges or joint lines where you want them. Make extra rocks for additional scenery and to test colors.

Adding the 'skin' to layer 1

It's time to get some texture or 'skin' on the board. This step will be messy, so spread some newspaper or waxed paper under your board. Modeling plaster or instant papier-mache is what we'll use. Some folks like to pre-tint their skin material. I find it easier and less messy to color the skin afterwards.

10 In this step, the base terrain material (Layer

1) will be applied with rocks sunk in.

Modeling plaster

- Get a container with enough water to cover a roll of toilet paper.
- Cut or tear up the toilet paper and push it into the water.
- Wait for the paper to mostly break up and dissolve. What you now have is wood pulp.
- Use a stick blender or your hands to break up the water/paper mixture.
- Let the paper dissolve as much as possible.
- Squeeze handfuls of the mixture into a sieve to get as much water out as you can and place the clumps onto a cookie sheet to dry.
- When dry, break the

clumps into smaller bits and use the stick blender or your hands to get the wood pulp as fine as you can.

- When the wood pulp is absolutely dry, add an equal amount of Plaster of Paris.
- Stir the mixture to blend or tumble it in an enclosed container. Read the instructions! Use a rubber bowl or a disposable container for mixing. Add cool water to your instant papier-mache or molding plaster. Use your hands or a sturdy mixing tool as this powdery mix becomes thick and gooey before long. Mix to a uniform color.

The consistency you want is like cottage cheese. If the mixture is too wet, add more dry material. If it is too

dry, add more water. With modeling plaster, you need to act quickly. With instant papier-mache, you have more time, but read the instructions – PLEASE! You can tape the edges before you apply the skin.

Apply the mixture. Push it hard onto the board. You want the material to squeeze into the dimples you made to secure it to the board.

Glop your skin material over your Styrofoam mountain. Yes, glop. That's a technical term for being deliberately careless. After all, mountains are just piles of raw rock. Be sure to cover the entire surface.

Wet your fingers and create a wiggly little depression starting as wide as the face of the mountain and narrowing all the way down the center of the board. And, leave a flat area on the opposite corner of the mountain for a structure.

11 Add some 'boulders'. Press them into the skin. Rocks don't sit on top of the ground. They're buried over the years. If you want rockfall, it can be added later. Now is the time for just the larger rocks and boulders to be set onto the board. Just like in your own

garden, the eye doesn't like even numbers. Group larger rocks in odd-numbered clusters.

Push in some medium size rocks. Dribble some smaller rocks around the larger rocks and over the medium size rocks and push them into the skin material or add them later and glue them in. Fiddle with the rocks until you are happy. Don't concern yourself if the rocks are loose. The next step will take care of it.

Add grit. Sieve grit or grout onto your base or just pinch some between your fingers over the base

TOPTIP:

Make your own scenic cement with a mixture of one part of PVA (white glue) or matte medium to two parts of water with a few drops of liquid soap. Be sure to clean out your pump spray mechanism at the end of every session or it will clog. Remove the pumper and put the intake tube into a cup of warm, soapy water. Pump until all the white is gone. Then, pump warm water through the pumper to get long service from your pumper.

to distribute the grit. Go monochrome or vary the tints over different areas. This will subtly change the tone from area to area, a desired effect.

12 Let your skin dry. This can take a few hours to a day or two depending on the material you used and how wet it was. If you want to speed up the drying, some shop lights with incandescent bulbs will work.

13 'Set' your skin by spraying isopropyl alcohol over the entire board followed by a generous amount of scenic cement. The alcohol lets the scenic cement flow into the tiniest spaces, the scenic cement sets and protects your work. And, since you use scenic cement with every layer, the successive misting will make your scenery hard and secure.

TOPTIP:

You might end up with several potions and lotions, such as diluted matte medium, PVA glue, liquid soap, isopropyl alcohol, etc. It's a good practice to mark or label the bottles.

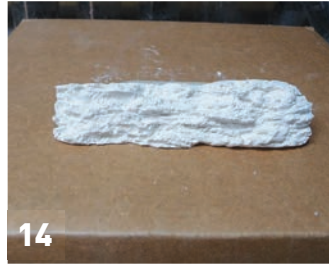
TOPTIP:

Use distilled water in water mixes to prevent mold from growing.

14 Coloring your rocks. This is a good place to introduce the concept of 'replicate, represent or reference'. 'Replicating' is making an exact miniature. For a tree that means leaf-shaped leaves. It's having branches and twigs that match the parent and bark and roots and fallen leaves that are an exact copy of the original. Consider this for foreground trees only.

'Representing' a tree is the middle ground. For this you might use 'leaf-bits' or flock over some clump foliage or foliage net (more on flock and foliage later). Leaf-bits are small pieces of colored plastic. They give texture rather than exact detail.

"Referencing" a tree gives a visual impression of a tree. This can be a painted backdrop or even some colored foam without even a trunk or branches. The eye is looking for a tree and is satisfied. Decide what level you want by balancing your resources; time, money, space, talent and energy. I don't like to settle for 'good



enough' but I am willing to yield to 'great enough'.

Now we'll put color on the rocks to give depth. In later layers, details will be added for more texture, detail and interest.

Rock coloring combines blending and highlighting. We'll 'leopard spot' the rocks (putting dabs of colors on the plain rocks) with secondary colors. Then, we'll add the main color. After that, we'll emphasize the crevices with a wash and finally, we'll dry-brush highlights.

If your rocks have thoroughly dried from their molds, wet them generously with 'wet water' to accept the color washes.

Select secondary colors and dilute them with water

to an 8:1 ratio. These are often burnt or raw umber, earth color, yellow ochre, or red oxide. Grey rocks are combinations of gray and black. Yes, we apply the secondary colors first.

Apply the first secondary color to your rocks in random areas with a brush in the 'leopard spotting' manner. This means applying color in dabs or blotches over about 1/3 of the rock.

Apply the second secondary color on another third of the rock and leave a third of the rock the original color. You want the colors to run and overlap, just like in nature.

15 While the secondary colors are still wet,



apply the main color, twice as diluted as the secondary colors, over the rocks to cover the skin and blend in the secondary colors.

16 If you are satisfied after the colors dry, seal with scenic cement. Wait for the colors to dry as they get lighter when dry. If you don't like the color, you can tweak it at this stage. If you are dissatisfied, paint your rocks with white base color and try again.

17 Apply the dark wash with black or very dark gray paint or even India ink diluted 8:1 or 16:1 ratio with water. Practice on some scrap rocks.

18 If you like the results, seal it again with scenic cement.

19 Dry-brushing causes the highlighted areas of your rocks to pop. This two-step method starts with a very light version of your lightest secondary color first. Get some color on a short, stiff bristled brush.

Stroke your brush back-and-forth on a rag or paper towel to get most of the color off. Test it on your wrist. No drops, no streaks, just a delicate blush of color.

Whisk your brush across the edges of your rocks allowing a tiny bit of color to appear on the higher edges and a bit beyond where the sun would hit the rock.

Now, apply dry-brushed

TOPTIP:

Keep your brushes used for dry-brushing separate from your other brushes.

pure white color to the very tips and edges of the rocks allowing some of the first dry-brushed light color to show. As always, if you like the look, seal with scenic cement.

Congrats! You have now completed Layer One. Your scenery base is now ready for Layer Two, low vegetation. Be sure to look for it in the next issue of *AM*.

If you have any questions feel free to email me at HandscapesbyJeff@gmail.com.



A miniature costal dream house

Cecile followed her heart and made a dream home in miniature

BY CECILIE RICHARDSON

Welcome to the Madera House! The journey to where I am now, began when I was a young girl who took on the role of setting up my Barbie house very seriously. I wanted it to look as real as possible, including the little pieces of paper 'mail' in my homemade mailbox.

My love for playing never really ended. I only gave it up because I felt I was too old to play anymore. Life continued to go on... college, marriage, a job,

then giving up said job to become a mother. As a creative person I needed an outlet, and that is when I realized it was time to stop daydreaming about that dollhouse on the top shelf at Hobby Lobby, and actually buy it!

‘I pictured this house on a beautiful piece of land on the coast of Massachusetts.’

After falling in love with fixing it up, and a huge push from my mom I started an Instagram account and instantly found ‘my people’. The encouraging, talented, and inspiring miniaturists on the there have really kept me going; even with a very active toddler who keeps me plenty busy. Once I finished my first dollhouse, which

Below left: Devoted miniaturist Cecilie Richardson. **Below and right:** Some beautiful photos of the living room, which feels fresh and inviting.



DOLLHOUSE TOUR







Left: The kitchen has a lemon theme with a modern touch.

Above: The laundry room has contrasting wallpaper and a beautiful wood floor.

Below: The laundry room sink featured real fresh flowers from Cecilie's actual garden.

acrylic paints and water.) When you enter you are greeted by patina furniture, shiplap, warm inviting colors, and fresh bouquets.

My bouquets are mostly

made of the tiniest flowers I can find growing around my yard. Each time I go looking I feel like I'm on a mini treasure hunt. The house features a beautiful fireplace,

came fully assembled, I knew I wanted to try my hand at building one. I fell in love with the Victorian Alison Jr. Kit by Real Good Toys, and knew exactly what style and modifications I wanted to make to it.

I pictured this house on a beautiful piece of land on the coast of Massachusetts. The house is painted a creamy cotton white with warm brown trim and doors (the stain is a mixture of a few





Above: The master bedroom is comfortable and clean. **Right:** One of the bathrooms in the house.

mint colored cabinets with an eat-in kitchen, and a master bedroom that gives you a bed and breakfast feel complete with a rich stained shutter headboard.

The master bath has a gorgeous custom vanity by Julieb Minis, that pairs well with the mixture of patterns throughout the room and gold accents. The third story is a perfect work space for the cozy home office, and lovely laundry room with





Above and right: This bathroom is stylish and you can see all the fun the maker had putting it together.

cabinetry, folding station, and porcelain sink.

Throughout the house you will find many items I have made myself which includes most of the home décor, kitchen accessories; many of the furniture pieces I painted or altered to fit the look I was trying to achieve.

The kitchen cabinets were from a set that had shelves with backing attached to the base cabinets. I cut the shelving





Left: A look at the outside of the charming dollhouse.

in *Dollhouse Miniatures* issue 73). Her light fixtures and hardware can make a huge impact in any room.

I find the hardest part of putting a dollhouse together is that I may only be average height in real life, but I am a giant to my creations. So many pieces have been dropped to the floor to never be found again.

The most alluring part of miniatures to me is that you can create your own world where rearranging furniture is a breeze, and real-world problems don't exist. Now I am on to my next project, a dilapidated house that is now ran by witches!

off at the top of the counters. Then I painted and changed the hardware on the lower cabinets to give them a more modern look, and repurposed the upper shelves for my laundry room, and also for above the desk in the office. It's not always easy to find exactly what you are looking for, so creating your own or upcycling certain pieces just adds to the fun!

I delight in making a lot of things around my own home too, and I am always inspired to make them in miniature. I sell realistic decorations, kitchen dishes including Rae Dunn inspired items, and seasonal trimmings. I also love to buy from other miniaturists, we are all enjoying this together, after all. One of my favorites is Kristine Hanna (Featured



DOLLHOUSE TOUR



Mid-century clock

Make a mid-century modern clock two ways

BY SHERRILL NECESSARY AND RITA @ DILLY DALLY DOLLHOUSE

Rita loves mid-century modern design, Sherrill had a mid-century childhood. Rita has a Cricut Maker, Sherrill has a Silhouette Cameo 4. They met through their love of miniatures and came up with a fun project for you.

Rita is expert at seeing the most essential design elements in mid-century modern furnishings and translating them into dollhouse scale. With her Cricut Maker she makes all manner of modern miniature furniture.

The new technology now permeating the miniatures world got Sherrill's at-

tention. She purchased a Cameo 4 so she could take part. She also enjoys writing and illustrating tutorials to help others learn.

While doing a quick survey of other technology users, Sherrill met Rita through her blog and was impressed with the tutorials she created. She invited Rita to be an *American Miniaturist* contributor. The two worked well together finding that their strengths were complementary.

They thought it would be fun to collaborate on a project using their respective cutting machines. Rita selected a boomerang wall

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

For Cricut Die cut machine:

- Drawing app like Inkscape
- 1/32" basswood

For Cameo Die cut machine:

- Thin chipboard

- Wood veneer

For both machines:

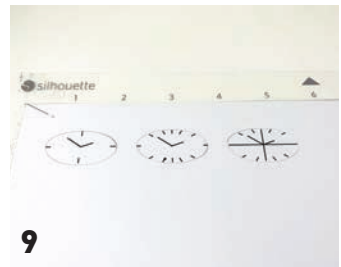
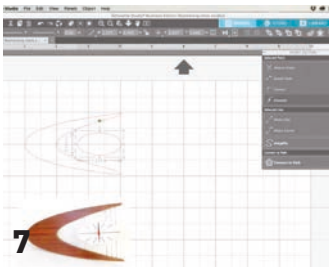
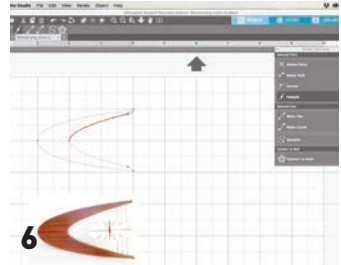
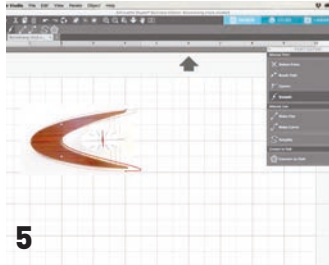
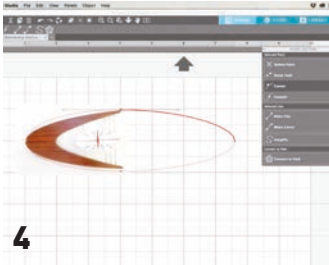
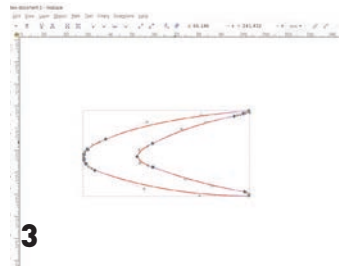
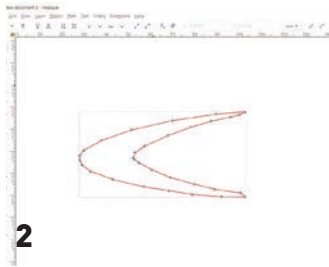
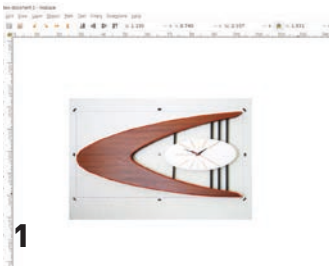
- White card stock
- 1mm stiff wire (like for floral or jewelry)
- Wire cutter
- Craft knife
- Ball stylus
- Ruler
- Craft glue
- Black pen
- Stain or wood finish

clock that could be created by manipulating curved lines and ovals.

Sherrill began drawing in Cameo's Silhouette Studio software while Rita created the design in Inkscape, a free vector graphic drawing. Both have the capability of importing and tracing an image and altering your lines using nodes and bezier curves. Design Space has only a set of basic shapes that can be resized and combined.



PROJECT



Both imported the clock image and made it 3" across. We will first show how Rita created the boomerang shape using Inkscape and then how Sherrill did it in Silhouette Studio.

Rita's method in Inkscape

1 Using the bezier tool in Inkscape, trace the shape of the boomerang by clicking around the curves.

2 The nodes (gray squares) here show the clicks. Change the two

nodes at the tips of the boomerang to "corner". To keep the rest of the boomerang shape smooth, change all other nodes to "smooth".

3 You can further refine the boomerang shape by moving each node and their blue handles. Feel free to delete some nodes that don't seem necessary.

Sherrill's Method in Cameo's Silhouette Studio

4 To create the basic shape, draw an oval over

the boomerang and modify it by adding nodes (gray squares), and bringing the right end into the left.

5 Specifically, grab the node at the extreme right on the oval and bring it to the inner curve of the clock.

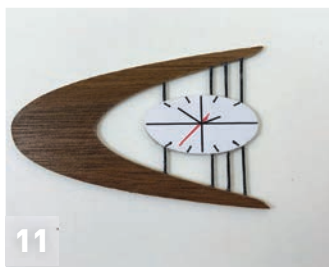
6 Add nodes by clicking just inside the right end tips and define all the nodes on the tips as corners. Use the blue handles to adjust the shape.



7 Trace the small oval clock face and drag it into position to check proportions. Make adjustments as needed. Draw a simple clock face using the software or draw it by hand later.

8 If you created your shapes in Inkscape, save them in svg format and upload them to your Cricut. Cut 2 boomerang shapes from 1/32" basswood with the grain running horizontally. Cut 1 oval from basswood and 1 oval from card stock. See Step 9 if you choose to use Draw and Cut for the clock face.

The Cameo 4 is not yet able to easily cut basswood so Sherrill used Silhouette thin chipboard layered with wood veneer. She cut 2 layers of Silhouette chipboard for each shape. Then cut 1 layer of walnut veneer for the boomerang and 1 layer of white card stock for the clock face. See step 9 if you choose to use Sketch and Cut for the clock face. Glue the 2 chipboard layers together.



9 You can use "Draw/Sketch and Cut" for the clock face. Using the line tool, draw (or trace) the hour markers and hands on the oval. Change the line type to Draw on the Cricut, and Sketch on the Cameo. Sherrill tried several designs.

10 Use stiff wire about 1mm thick for the rods that hold the pieces together. This can be jewelry or floral wire or whatever you have on hand. We painted ours black. Cut four pieces to span the height. To assemble your clock, on the back layer, use a craft knife or a small ball stylus to cut channels for the wires. The groove on the right is 3/16" from the tips. Then carve two more 3/16" apart and one at the left of the oval. Glue the wires into the grooves.

11 Stain and/or seal the boomerang shape. Glue it over the wires onto the backing. Glue the clock face into position.

Mini tutorials needed

We hope you have been enjoying all of the wonderful tutorials featured in *American Miniaturist*. There are so many impressive creative ideas and new techniques in the miniature community. We try our best to find projects we think our readers will enjoy, but we know there are more that we can find out there.

If you would like to be a part of this fun publication, please consider being one of our valued contributors.

We have great opportunities for miniaturists who submit tutorials such as credit towards subscriptions and individual issues. And, if you are in business, your tutorials might actually help promote what you are selling. We'll furnish you with these details after your submission has been approved.

Imagine how much joy your mini project could give others who share your passion for this art form!

Send your step-by-step instructions and photos to Tutorial Submission, *American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address. We can't wait to see your projects!

Basket weaving

Card stock baskets are easy to make

BY BELINDA MCWILLIAMS

Making baskets from card stock for fall harvest is affordable and easy to do! You can use brown card stock or any color you like. Scrapbook paper is ideal. Or you can paint white card stock to look like a woven reed or bamboo basket.

- 1 Start by cutting 12 strips that are 2mm wide and 7cm long.
- 2 Line up 6 lengths with a slight space between.
- 3 Hold a finger down over one end or tape it down.
- 4 Weave a length through. Then weave another



length through, alternating.

5 Gently ease the weave close into a square. I used my tweezers to push each strip closer. Take your time and work gently.

6 Fold the lengths up. This makes the base of the basket.

7 Cut 6 strips 2mm wide 8cm long.

8 Weave the long piece through forming the sides into a box.

9 Cut the length to join behind a strip with the tiniest dot of glue.

10 Add the next strip and the next. The sample has 5 strips.



11 Fold the inside strips over.

12 Trim the inside strips so they will fit over the top row.

13 Glue down with a tiny dot of glue.

14 Trim the remaining strips, fold to the outside and glue down.

15 Add a handle if you desire.

Other basket styles

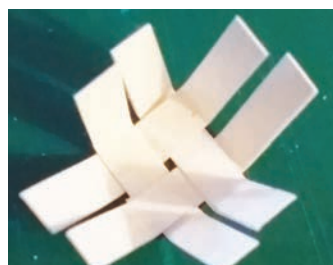
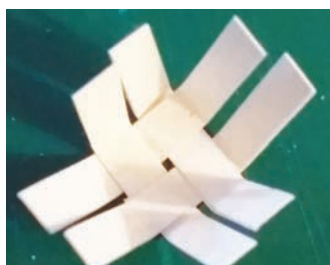
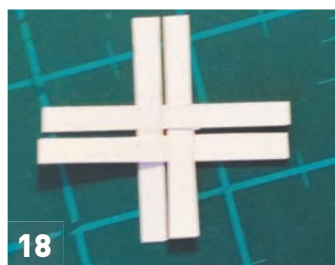
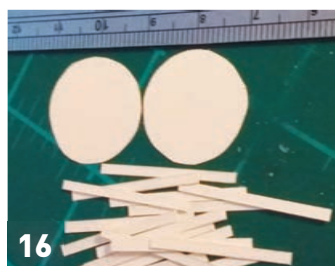
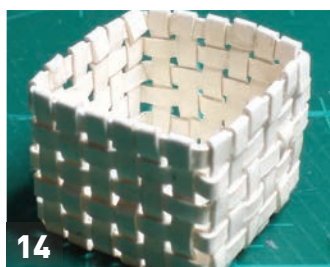
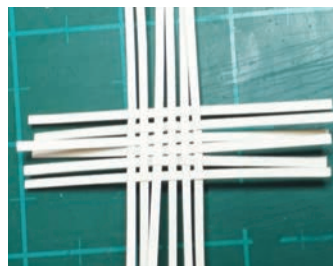
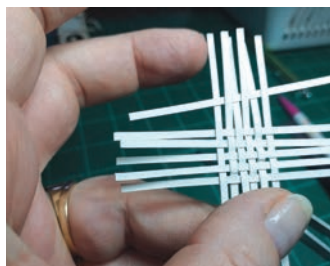
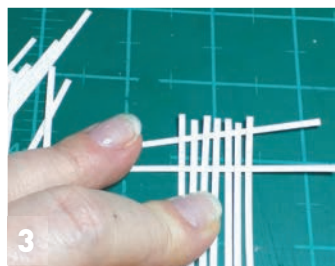
16 Cut the strips narrower 1.5mm or 1mm which will make the basket

Scale = 1:12

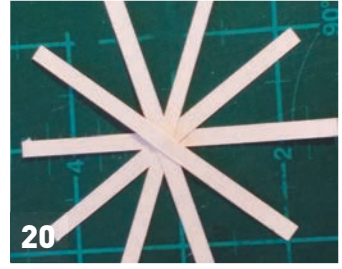
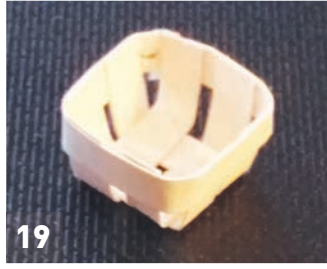
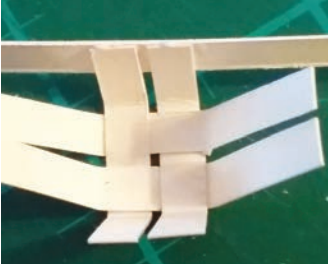
Materials:

- Card stock - in any color you like or you can paint
- Steel ruler
- Pencil (propelling)
- Craft knife with new blade
- Tweezers
- Small sharp scissors
- White glue
- Ruler - mm, cm, inches

PROJECT



PROJECT



much finer but it will be more fragile in the making. I made a round basket

too with a round disc and glued the strips around the edge then folded up the strips and wove as I did the square basket finishing the top the same way.

17 Or you can make some bushel baskets like you would use in a market scene.

18 Using card stock, cut 5 strips that are 4mm wide and 4cm long. These are perfect for cherries.

20 Using card stock, cut 6 strips that are 4mm wide and 7cm long.

21 These are perfect for a basket of peaches.

dollhouse miniatures

FINE MINIATURE ART FOR THE DEVOTED COLLECTOR

Don't miss the tutorials, tips, and techniques by top makers in the latest issue of Dollhouse Miniatures. Dawn Monk makes a quilt. Sandra Harding makes faux bronze statues and Bill and Gina Theesfield share their 1:12 garden deck.



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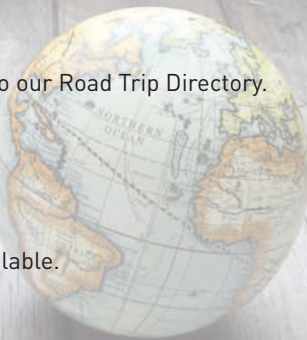
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■ Some of our upcoming showcases are: Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and spring. If you would like to be considered in these top miniature artist showcases, email auralea@ashdown.co.uk with images and the showcase you are interested in.

ARTIST

THIS MONTH WE CELEBRATE



CLAUDIA CAMPANALE

ITALY

1:12 scale gourd sliced open, green grapes and an assortment of gourdes.



SHOWCASE

FALL HARVEST AND COMFORT FOODS FROM TOP MAKERS



KATHY OBRENSKI
USA

A realistic display of fruits,
vegetables and cheese.





CRISTINA HAMPE DEUTSCHLAND

Meats and desserts that are perfect for a family gathering.



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Cristina Hampe

Email: cristinahampe@gmail.com

Etsy: <https://etsy.me/2K4DUKK>

Instagram: @cristina_hampe_minis

Facebook: Mini-Mini Cristina Hampe Miniatures

MO TIPTON

USA

No matter what your holiday meal is Mo can set a table that will make your mouth water.



GINA THEESFIELD

USA

A holiday dinner and breakfast.



A herd of festive inspiration

Kristin Castenschiold's herd of mini reindeer take us on a festive flight to the North Pole

BY SADIE BROWN

Kristin Castenschiold's 1:12 scale reindeer are much in demand, her seasonal order book already bursting at the seams in September. "I offer the Reindeer year-round as a custom order but I try to also have them in stock as we get closer to the holidays. Because they take so long to make, I limit the number to only a few of each style a year," says Kristin, always on the lookout for new ways to style her festive herd. "I've also expanded to mother and baby reindeer per requests from returning customers. My original goal was to make a team of nine reindeer which I wanted to photograph with a beautiful wood sleigh I have. However, I've never been able to keep more than two or three in stock at a time."

Kristin, one of our most exemplary animal artisans, makes two types of reindeer. In addition to the emblematic caribou of the natural world,



A Christmas gift for someone special.

Kristin creates the equally evocative golden reindeer drawn from the childhood

memories which go on to define Christmas throughout our lives. "It's similar to a



regular deer but has the longer mane and furry hocks and is larger in size which match my visions of Santa's Reindeer as a child." she explains, describing the style which also pays homage to a much loved table decoration owned by her grandmother, who assembled a fabulous collection of Christmas

decorations over the years, creating many wonderful memories. It's clear that these very special ornaments remain hugely influential for Kristin. "She always had a team of eight antique metal reindeers pulling a sled with an antique Santa candy box on her mantle," she says. "In addition, the scene included

Top left: "I want antlers like yours!" **Top right:** The night before Christmas. **Above:** Jingle bells and Christmas lights!

miniature German flocked sheep, cottages, and my grandparents' first Christmas tree which they purchased for \$5 from Macy's in 1946 for their apartment in the Hotel Webster in New York



Right: Mom and calf. The most exciting night of the year! The sun sets on Christmas Eve.

City. Sadly, my grandmother is no longer with us but all of these antique Christmas decorations grace my parents' home during the holiday season. They will be cherished family heirlooms for generations to come!"

Before they're ready to set out on their annual festive flight, Kristin's reindeer start life as handpicked plastic models. Each one is carefully chosen for its potential before being paired back to allow her to start with a blank canvas. She then adds the lifelike glass eyes her miniature animals are synonymous with and creates the reindeer's unique pose



before painting the base. The reindeer's lush coat is a time-consuming part of the process, but it's also one of the most important, and Kristin uses locally sourced soft alpaca wool to ensure they appear as authentic as possible. "A small bit of hair goes a long way and I was given full fleeces of it, so I probably have a lifetime supply! After all the hair is attached the intense detail begins, which is really when the reindeer comes to life and develops his or her personality!"

For Kristin, childhood Christmases also meant enjoying all the fun of the fair – the craft fair! Many readers will be familiar with Kristin and her mother, Martha as the well-known mother and daughter duo, but long before Martha's hand sewn tartan blankets were keeping Kristin's miniature reindeer warm, Kristin was accompanying her mother to shows. It was here that they sold the popular chalkware Santa Claus figurines made using Martha's collection of vintage candy molds. "Every year, as the holiday shopping season began, I would start to look forward to the thought of Christmas," recalls Kristin with great fondness. "There is just something so magical about the decorations, food, thoughts of buying



“Kristin’s reindeer have become an international herd, almost as well travelled as Rudolph himself.”

gifts and the general happiness felt around the holiday season. Once I began making miniatures, I right away tried to think of ways to incorporate the holidays with my miniatures.”

Above: Family heirlooms. Kristin’s Christmas memories.

Having recently retired, Martha has left the work treadmill behind. She is now seeking to enjoy her newfound freedom to focus on soaking up that festive atmosphere in miniature with some highly anticipated new projects. Martha is currently working on an exciting project which harks back to those days at the craft fairs, creating miniature characters based on the candy mold designs which



have brought mother, daughter and many others a great deal of seasonal joy. Kristin credits her mother's influence for much of her creative streak. "Together we're always trying to think of new, inspiring ideas to incorporate in our work. It keeps things interesting, so you don't run into a rut from making the same old thing over and over."

These inspirational new ideas include Martha's Christmas carts, piled high with festive joy and Yuletide decorations. The original idea stemmed from one or two miniature ponies who were feeling a little forlorn after spending some time searching for their forever stable. Mar-

tha took the chance to combine these gorgeous ponies with hand-crafted Christmas carts. Following their success at doll house shows prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, mother and daughter are now hoping to take the design even further, creating carts for other occasions.

"Together we're always trying to think of new, inspiring ideas to incorporate in our work."

The holiday season is especially hectic for Kristin. In addition to running a

Above: Joint venture. Kristin and Martha's Christmas pony and cart.

thriving miniatures business and having the demands of a young family to care for, she also lives on the family Christmas tree farm owned by successive generations. Being surrounded by the new shoots of Christmas on a daily basis, it's not surprising that the festivities continue to have such a profound influence on her miniatures work. She even manages to mix the two together occasionally! "We proudly display a few Christmas themed miniature boxes in the tree farm office every year for families to enjoy while picking out their Christmas tree."

Kristin is also an exceptional photographer, with a gift for creating atmosphere. Many of her beautiful snowy images capture the glow of the cold winter sun, ready to fall below the horizon, and setting the scene for the most magical night of the year. Other scenes capture the excitement of a visit to the North Pole. Here, a little girl seizes the opportunity to give a carrot shaped gift to one of the golden reindeer inspired by Kristin's grandmother's ornaments. The silver Christmas tree in both this scene and another where Santa can be found posing for the perfect greetings card image, is a thing of beauty. Glistening with the most striking tiny ornaments

Above: No late deliveries here.



in rich greens, blues and golds. It wouldn't look out of place gracing the holiday windows of Fifth Avenue!

Kristin's reindeer have become an international herd, almost as well travelled as Rudolph himself. They have found suitable stabling across the globe, including in one instance, moving into a custom built design. "I have one collector who is building

a reindeer stable with several moms and babies as well as several male reindeer dressed in harnesses ready to pull Santa's sleigh," says Kristin. "It makes me so happy that something I make can be treasured and cherished as families celebrate the holidays every year much like I still admire my grandmother's wood decoration that inspired me as a child."

Tradition is so important at Christmas time and it has been wonderful to witness first hand how Kristin's own family history has inspired her miniature art, leading to the creation of pieces which will go on to become part of our own stories.

Happy Holidays!



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Sled table

Turn your sled into a 'porch deco table'

BY ELIZE VAN ES

There are so many miniatures you can make with little means and materials that you can find around the house. With that in mind and also the gratification of using a miniature in a new way this little sled is easy to make and can be quickly transformed into a outside/porch decor table. Have fun making it and giving it your own personal touch!

Draw a pattern for your sled irons. Because we are working with thin card stock we want 8 cut-outs. It seems like a lot of work, but I find the end result more



Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Card stock - light brown
- Tacky Glue or bookbinders glue
- 6-8 coffee stir sticks
- 2 toothpicks
- Thin metal wire
- A small piece of thread
- Watercolor paint
- Cutters
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Emery board or sand paper

realistic than working with thicker material and less cut-outs.

Glue 2 sets of 4 cut-

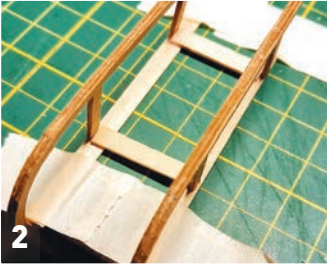
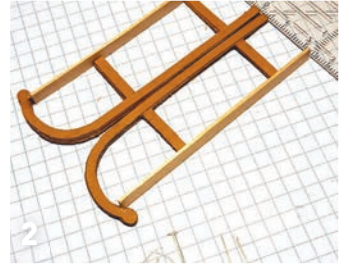
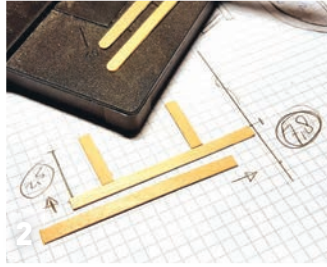
outs together. Make sure everything is aligned.

When working with card stock or board I love using

Pattern:



PROJECT



with bookbinders glue. It becomes a bit elastic and leaves room to bend and shape and also it sets really fast. You have to work fast though! When completely dry, sand the edges gently.

2 Take your coffee stir sticks and cut 2 to 7.8cm and 2 to 2.5cm. They are very easy to cut. I use a chopper because it's fast but scissors, a knife will work as well.

If necessary sand the edges gently. Glue the long

ones on top of the sled irons. Align the side and back. You don't want anything sticking out.

Glue the short ones between the legs. A bit of masking tape and working on the edge of your mat helps to glue them on correctly.

3 Cut 3 pieces to 6.5cm from your coffee stir sticks for the sled seat. Sand the edges a bit round.

Glue the sticks on top. Leave little openings

between them. This is also the moment you can easily scrape off extra glue with a toothpick.

Sand the TOP inner edges of the long sticks glued to the sled iron a bit round. Make sure they fit and align nicely and there are no sharp corners. When completely dry, gently sand away any irregularities.

4 For the shelves cut 2 sets of 4 pieces of 3cm long from your coffee stir sticks. Glue the 2

PROJECT



shelves together. Make sure the sticks are glued tight together and **DON'T SAND THEM** just yet. Let dry!

5 Punch a small hole at the top of the sled iron to glue in the wire. Do this on both sides. Cut a piece of wire a bit bigger than the opening between the two sled irons. Fold the wire, hold the middle and bend the two sides back. This is an easy way to make a little hook.

Cut the wire to fit. Make sure the hook is in the

middle. Glue in the little holes you made.

Take the shelves, sand a little corner out gently to make the shelves fit perfectly on the sled legs. Use an emery board or sanding paper. In this stage you can also cut the 2 toothpicks to fit and glue them to the front of the shelves. Let dry. When completely dry, gently sand away any leftover irregularities.

6 Let the painting begin! I just love this part. You can make the sled any color you like. For this project I wanted an aged, classic look so I used watercolors. Some gray, blue, green, browns with a lot of water. Just go with the flow, don't be shy – work with the

different color tones and get rid of too much water using a tissue or sponge. I let the work dry between layers, sand away when there is too much color or if I don't like the result. For the sled irons I used a mix of watered down black and brown paint.

Take your piece of thread and tie it onto the sled. If you want you can use a drop of glue on the knot. I also painted the thread lightly with the same mix of water downed black and brown, to give it an aged look as well.

Basically you're finish. You have a sled and by putting in the two shelves you have an porch decor table.

Start decorating!

A seaside Christmas

Celebrate a beach themed holiday season

BY KAREN HRITZ

Make a wreath and some garland with a beach theme to decorate your miniature beach house this season. You can add some glitter to make it more festive if you desire or keep it clean subtle. The holiday wreaths can also be fun ornaments for your life size Christmas tree!

1 Cut a piece of jute about 3 foot long. Put some glue on the plastic ring and secure the end of the jute. Hold it in place long enough for the jute to stick securely to the ring.

2 Wrap the jute around the ring, applying a little glue a little bit at a time, keeping the loops



tight against each other so that the ring is completely covered.

3 Glue a few tiny seashells onto the wreath and let dry.



4 For the garland, simply cut a piece of jute about 18" long. Glue tiny seashells onto the jute, spacing them about an inch apart. Let dry and wrap around the Christmas tree or drape on a windowsill or doorway.



Materials:

Scale = 1:12

- Fine jute cord
- Tiny seashells
- Plastic ring (mine are 1.5" wide)
- White glue
- Scissors
- Ruler

THE mini SCOOP

■ AM's news page is devoted to keeping busy miniaturists up to speed. Please submit items of mini interest to auralea@ashdown.co.uk or to *American Miniaturist* - Mini Scoop, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944.

Show Date

2021
Feb 6 & 7
San Diego, CA

47th Annual San Diego Miniatures Show & Sale will be held February 6 & 7, 2021 on Saturday from 10am-5pm and Sunday 11am-4pm. The show will held at San Diego Marriott Del Mar, 11966 El Camino Real, San Diego CA 92130. For more

information, please visit www.sdminiatureshow.com plus be sure to check updates and new details that will be posted on our social media pages! <https://www.facebook.com/sdminiatures/> and <https://www.instagram.com/sd.minishow/>

Updates and new details will be posted on our social media pages!



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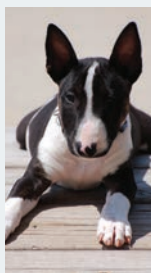
Hobby Builders Supply/miniatures.com has DIY miniature kits that are irresistible! Other than a few basic craft supplies, everything you need to complete each kit as shown is in the box. Experienced crafters can have a finished, fully accessorized project in just a few days! Choose from 17 kits, including Cathy's Flower House, Sam's Study, and Dora's Loft. Visit <https://www.miniatures.com/Search.aspx?k=little+kits> to learn more!

AM Social Media

We have a lot happening on *American Miniaturist's* Facebook and Instagram page! Be sure to follow us and be a part of our future polls, keep up with the latest news in our miniature community and enjoy fun giveaways!

Giveaway contributions

If you would like to be considered to have your products featured for our giveaways with your free link mentioned please email the editor at auralea@ashdown.co.uk.



WHERE'S ARTHUR CONTEST

Arthur was found on page 73 hiding in the grocery bag in the Sept-Oct issue (*AM209-210*). We have randomly selected **Stella** from **Columbia, SC** to be our winner for this month's Where's Arthur contest.

We will be sending her a very special prize from Hobby Builders Supply/miniaturess.com for helping us find Arthur.

But as you know Arthur loves to roam through each page and, as expected, he has once again wandered off while we weren't looking. Hopefully you can help us find him.

November-December Highlights contest



We would love to know what your favorite highlights were in this issue of *AM*. You could win a CastleCrafts kit by Belinda McWilliams from www.castlecrafts.co.za. All it takes is a written paragraph for this random drawing!

Send your entry to September Highlights contest, *American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address.

Sewing chest

Etsy.com/shop/MiniMelange has donated this 1:12 scale sewing chest to giveaway.



Contest entries

To be eligible for the listed contests/giveaways please indicate the **name of the contest/giveaway** and **AM issue number** and send your entry to *American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944, or email them to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address. The deadline for this issue's entry is **Thursday, December 17, 2020**. Good luck!

Recent winners

Sept.-Oct. Highlights

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Sisterly love through minis

This Hummingbird Cottage dollhouse was an amazing estate sale find and now gets a second life

BY JOAN MCKENZIE

Some of us are born with a lot of imagination, and we find ways to create what we cannot afford, especially as children. The following is a true story about my younger sister who has agreed to this interview to share her lovely little dollhouse and her history with miniatures.

When Jean Ricci was a little girl, she was fascinated with all things small. As a five-year-old she attended Kindergarten and was fortunate enough to have a very young teacher named Miss

‘When Jean Ricci was a little girl, she was fascinated with all things small.’

Kumakawa. This teacher asked the children to bring to school an empty matchbox container. In the mid 1950’s milk was served in small glass containers with a round cardboard pull top. The teacher also asked each child to bring in as many of the cardboard pull tops from milk bottles

as possible.

The following day Jean came home with a huge grin on her face as she showed our mom how she had painted the matchbox a shiny red color, and the wheels (milk bottle tops) were painted black with silver spokes. They made a pull-handle from spare cardboard which was painted black as well. Inside

Below left: Jean Ricci, the owner of this beautiful miniature cottage. **Below:** The front of the Franklin Mint *Hummingbird Cottage* has lots of charm.



DOLLHOUSE TOUR



the wagon there were little clay bunnies with tiny cotton tails removed from a Q-tip. I remember being so impressed at how adorable the finished project was that I wished I could return to Kindergarten. I tried to make one on my own, but it was not as good as Jean's. I was always in awe of her creativity.

While we didn't have money for things that were not necessities, that didn't stop Jean from creating an entire grocery store, filled with cans and boxes of assorted foods and lined up on her shelves.





Above: The living room is decorated for the holidays.

There were weekly paper advertisements sent through the mail, and also added to the grocery bags indicating what products would be on sale the following week. These ads included color pictures of many varieties of canned and boxed food, which Jean would clip and glue to her clay cans and boxes for added realism. Some pictures came directly from cereal boxes. Most people who looked at

this miniature grocery store were quite impressed. I was a 7-year-old who kept going back and forth between being jealous of my own baby sister's creations, to being exceptionally proud of her talent.

On rainy days we would play board games and also with paper dolls. By 1966 there were 11 children in our family. Jean and I were two of the oldest who had multiple responsibilities at young ages toward cleaning, cooking and care giving for

the new babies. We learned everything possible about childcare through necessity, as our mother needed our help and support. We have been through good times and bad together, but the good outweighs everything else.

Jean had a few tiny treasures growing up that remain in her memory. One was a gift from her Godmother Lillian who gave her a miniature glow in the dark "Infant of Prague" statue. For her to be the only one in our large family to own



a tiny doll, that would light up when it was bedtime was like handing her a gold bar. She knew she had something special there, so she treasured that little sacred talisman for many years.

When Jean was a teenager our youngest sisters Peggy and Gerri were just little girls. They both asked for a dollhouse as their Christmas gift, but she knew that our mother would not be able to afford one. Jean was working full time but decided to put her skills to the test each night, creating something special for these two beloved little sisters.

‘Experience has taught her that resolutions to problems come with time.’

She asked for no help from anyone else as she set to work creating a dollhouse from two milk crates stacked atop one another, using cardboard, clay and any other household items she could find. Spools of thread worked well for seats at a table. Just about everything she touched in her miniature stash of clippings,

Above: The master bedroom is charming and full of fun!

threads, yarn etc. was put to use. She cut holes for windows and made curtains that the children loved. The end result was a dollhouse that our two youngest sisters will never forget. I was so impressed!

Fast forward 40 years to 4 years ago when I had taken a Sunday drive to my favorite local miniature shop, Earth and Tree Miniatures, in New Hampshire. All the way from the highway I could see something in the window of that darling little shop that pulled

me in where I made a beeline to the house that I saw from the highway. It was part of an estate sale with multiple dollhouses. Someone's son was selling his Mom's beautifully artistic miniature treasures.

This little 4 room house was originally from the Franklin Mint collection and called *Hummingbird Cottage*. This was originally limited in number to 2500 count, introduced in the 1990's. I knew immediately that I wanted this little 4 room house and was stunned by how inexpensive it was being sold for by my favorite dollhouse shop. I brought it home, cleaned it up and started adding tiny furniture for the interior. It was in excellent shape.



About 6 months later Jean came to my home for a visit and saw the cottage for the first time in person, I could see how her eyes lit up when she looked at it.

Above: Lots of toys in this room for the grandchildren.

On that same day, she asked her daughter to come look at this dollhouse. I knew from that moment on that I wanted to fill this little house with tiny things that would mean something special to Jean and started a small list in my head about meaningful miniatures that had to be inside before I would give it to her.

Once that was decided, my first email for help was to one of my closest friends in the miniature world - Lynn Jowers from South Africa. Lynn has never failed to help me with custom orders. This time I wanted help recreating a wonderfully unique bed that Jean







Left: Beautifully made bunk beds and dresser by Lynn Jowers.

end tables, a mirror and a bureau that complimented the bed perfectly. For the children's room she made bunk beds, a special dresser, a window seat, toy chest, a child's rocking chair, a pull toy horse and gorgeous bookshelves.

‘All of these items were handcrafted from cherry wood and finished with a patina that is as smooth as silk.’

All of these items were handcrafted from cherry wood and finished with a patina that is as smooth as silk. This took Lynn the better part of a year to complete

and her first husband had purchased from the Ethan Allen collection in the mid 70's. There was a headboard that included beautiful sliding doors where one might keep an alarm clock, books, tissues and/or mints. The sliding doors were made of small ornate dowels. From one photograph and a few measurements Lynn not only perfectly recreated that beautiful bed, but she added



along with her other orders. I was in no hurry to part with this charming house. I wanted to give it to my sister complete – so that she would want for nothing.

One of my favorite crochet artists made tiny blankets for the bunk beds. I chose dolls that looked the most like her 6 grandchildren to live in the house with one grandmother that Jean made during a Jeanne Rullie workshop at the IGMA Guild Show in September of 2018.

There are winding hidden staircases in the back of this house which make it seem larger than it is. The wallpaper adds charm all on its' own. I like to add real artwork to my walls, so I commissioned some paintings from Karry Johnson who always delights me.

I have asked Jean what she likes most about the miniature art form. Her first thought was that this miniature passion does not take up a lot of space in your home. She is able to create her own scenes with the tiny furniture she has and rearrange things so many different ways that the results are almost as dramatic as a face lift.

Today Jean is a very busy grandmother to 6 children under the age of 12, and mother to 4 of her own



“There are winding hidden staircases in the back of this house which make it seem larger than it is.”

children who are all young adults. She is very active in her children's and grandchildren's lives. Two of her little grandsons come to her home frequently enough so that they have become entranced with her miniature *Hummingbird Cottage*. They are gentle little boys and know what cannot be touched so they never break anything. It's a beautiful thing to witness.

Above: The front entrance to the cottage is simply magical.

The picture of Jean that's included for this feature story is one where she is holding her most requested signature family recipe called "spinach pies". If you look very carefully in her right hand, there is a tiny version of those spinach pies commission made by one of my favorite food artists named Minithaiss from Bosnia Herzegovina. Many artists contributed to making this Mini House perfect for my beloved sister. I would enjoy nothing more than to find the perfect little house for my other sisters and do it all over again!

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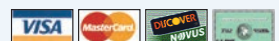
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Wall cabinet

A wall cabinet with drawers and hooks

BY KRIS COMPAS

I saw this cabinet online and thought it would make a good tutorial. The drawers and door open so you can fill them. The door is a little thick, I would recommend using 1/32" thick basswood for the outer layers and keep the middle layer. The door would then be 1/8" thick instead of 3/16". I used purchased wooden knobs and metal hooks from Hobby Builders Supply. The wire mesh is something I bought from a craft store or you can

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- 1/32" thick basswood
- 1/16" thick basswood
- 1/8" thick basswood
- Glue stick
- Scrap of paper
- Clamp
- Wooden knobs/metal hooks
- Wire mesh
- Metal ruler
- Yellow carpenters glue
- Saw or blade
- Fine sand paper
- Glass Paint
- T-pin
- Paintbrush



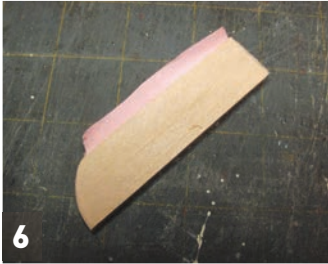
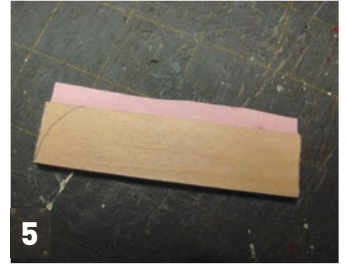
Google Paragona wire form or Amaco wire form. Let's get started building this little wall cabinet.

1 Cut the back and sides from 3/32" thick basswood. The back and sides are the same length or height, 3 1/8", the grain is vertical on both pieces.

2 After cutting that length, set the saw to 2 11/16" and cut the width of the

back. With the saw still set at 2 11/16" cut the bottom shelf that holds the drawers. This is cut from 1/16" thick stock, and will fit between the sides just like the back. It's easier to cut this now so you don't have to re-set the saw. The grain will be horizontal on this piece. I'll cut the depth of the shelf later along with the other shelves. Set this piece aside after you have it cut. You might want to mark what it's

PROJECT



for so you don't use it for something else.

3 Back to the sides, the sides are $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep or wide. After I have the width cut I am marking the curve at the bottom using my circle template. I am using the $1\frac{5}{8}$ " circle to mark that curve.

4 To make identical cuts, I am using glue stick to glue a scrap of paper to one side of a side. Apply glue stick to the paper.

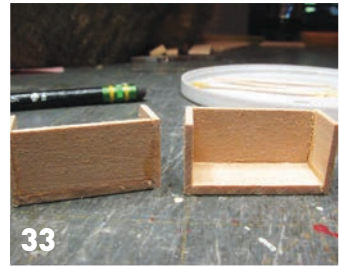
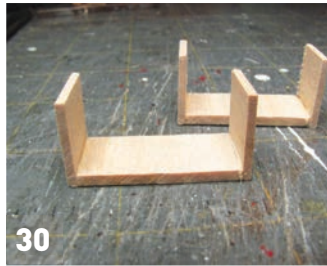
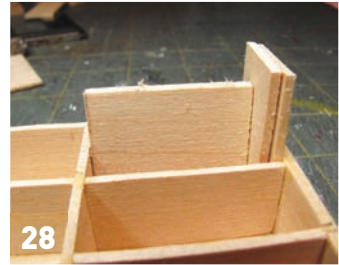
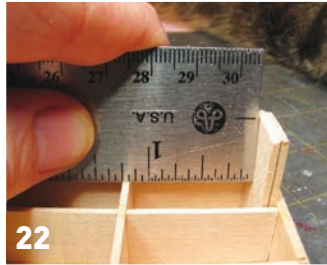
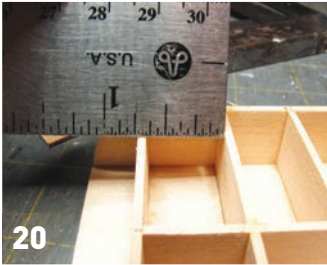
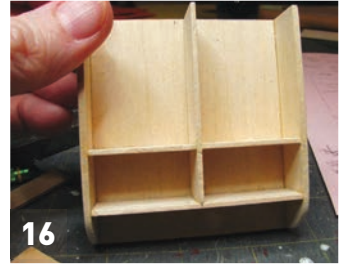
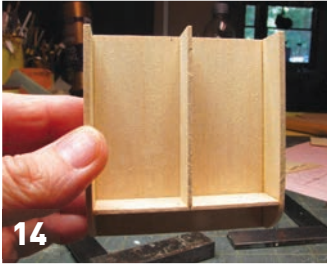
5 After applying glue stick to the paper, press the other side onto the paper. Line up all the edges and let this dry for about fifteen minutes. You might want to clamp this if you have clamps because the wood might curl away from the glue.

6 I used my scroll saw to cut the curve. Pop the two pieces apart, peel off the paper. Give the surface a light sanding to remove the glue residue. These are

my two sides and the back.

7 Use yellow carpenter's glue and glue the sides to the back. Glue the sides to the side edges of the back. Do not glue the sides on top of the back. Let this dry thoroughly.

8 The shelves and middle divider are $\frac{5}{8}$ " deep, your first shelf is cut to length all ready. Set the saw to $\frac{5}{8}$ " and cut the bottom shelf that width. With the saw still set on $\frac{5}{8}$ " cut



at least 10" of 1/16" thick basswood for the shelves and middle divider.

9 I cut myself a cheater block so my shelf will be level when glued. This piece of wood is 1/2" tall. That is the space left at the bottom of the cabinet. The cheater block doesn't have to be exactly the width of the back just close. Glue the shelf in. Let the glue tack, then carefully remove the cheater block. You should have a level shelf.

10 Find the middle of your cabinet back. Find the middle of the bottom shelf. Measure and cut the middle divider.

11 Center the divider on your marks and glue into your cabinet.

12 Re-measure to make sure your space at the top is the same measurement as the space at the bottom. It isn't as important to have exactly the same width on each side, but it

is important that the space be square or you will have trouble with your cabinet door. Let this dry a bit.

13 The second set of shelves will hold the drawers. Measure between the left side and the middle divider.

14 When you have that measurement, cut your shelf. Check that the width all the way up the left side is the same. Cut two more shelves for the left



side. Set aside for now.

15 You'll notice I cut myself another set of cheater blocks to get my shelves level. Cut a couple of pieces of scrap wood $21/32''$ tall, that's the space between these shelves. I am sorry about the $32''$ measurement, that's just past $5/8''$. At this point you change the distance between these shelves and the ones above. You are going to be measuring on your own so it's up to you.

16 Glue the shelf in, let it tack and carefully remove the cheater blocks.

17 Measure between the middle divider and the right side and cut another shelf.

18 You have another shelf for inside the cabinet, it is cut narrower to fit behind the cabinet door. Go ahead and cut this shelf to length now. We will cut its depth later. Set it aside.



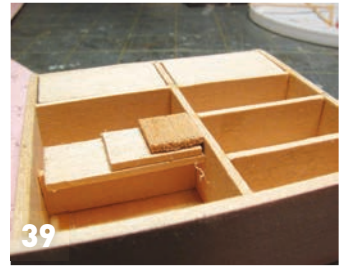
19 Glue the other shelf in and let this assembly dry for a bit.

20 From the looks of the next picture I got into the zone of constructing the cabinet and forgot to take pictures of gluing in the upper two shelves.

21 Cut some scrap wood for cheater blocks to $9/16''$ tall, that's the space between the shelves on the left side of the cabinet. Glue your two shelves in using yellow carpenter's glue. Let this assembly dry for a bit.

22 I am measuring for the drawer fronts. They are cut from $3/32''$ thick basswood. I must stress at this point you are going to have to measure for yourself and cut to your measurements. We all make our cuts a little differently. The width of a pencil line makes a great difference.

23 I want to leave a little room for the drawer



to slide in and out easily so I am going to cut the height of the drawer front at $5/8''$. That will leave a little room at top and bottom. Cut a piece of $3/32''$ thick basswood, enough to cut two drawer fronts from $5/8''$ wide. Set this aside.

24 Since I know the height of the drawer front I can also cut the height of the sides from $1/16''$ thick basswood. Cut the drawer sides, enough to cut four sides from.

25 Put two drawer sides into the drawer space and measure the width of the space left. I am measuring for the drawer bottom. I cut my drawer bottom at $1\ 1/8''$ wide.

26 The grain of the drawer bottom is going from front to back. The grain of the sides and back of the drawer is horizontal.

27 With your saw still set at $1\ 1/8''$ wide cut

a piece of basswood for the back. Label all of these pieces to keep straight.

28 I've slid in the drawer bottom with the sides (remember the sides haven't been cut to length, yet). Measure the depth of the drawer space, minus the thickness of the drawer front, $3/32''$.

29 I cut my drawer bottoms $1/2''$ deep. My saw is set at $1/2''$ and that is how long the sides are.

30 I have two drawer bottoms and four sides ready to be glued together. Glue the sides to the edges of the bottoms. Please let this dry.

31 Your back is all ready cut to length when you cut your drawer bottom. What you need to do is cut its height or width.

32 Measure on the inside of the drawer the height of the sides and set your saw and cut the backs.

33 Glue the backs onto the bottom and between the sides.

34 Measure along the bottom front of your

drawer and cut two drawer fronts that length. Glue the drawer fronts on.

35 I cut a top from $3/32''$ basswood. I cut it so that $1/8''$ is extra at each side and across the front. My top measured $3\ 1/8''$ long (from side to side) and $7/8''$ deep. The grain is horizontal. Glue your top onto the top of the cabinet.

36 My right side shelf is all ready cut to length. The shelf needs to be $3/16''$ less than the depth of the other shelves. $3/16''$ is how thick my door is.

37 I mentioned this before, I think I would have liked to use $1/32''$ thick wood for the face and back of the door, that would have the door be $1/8''$ thick. If you do this adjust the width of your shelf, add a $1/16''$ to my measurement.

38 My shelf width is $7/16''$ wide.

39 This picture shows the thickness of my door, 3 layers of $1/16''$ thick basswood brings it door even with the cabinet face.

40 I've made a cheater block for this, too. I've

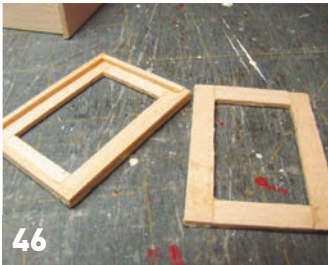
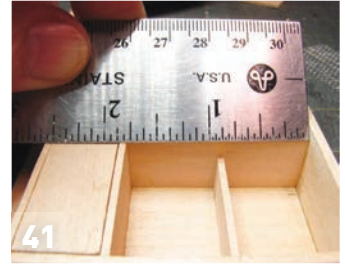
divided the space in half and cut my block $7/8''$ wide. Glue the shelf in and let it dry a bit.

41 Measuring for the stiles (the vertical part of the door frame) for the door. I cut them $1\ 3/4''$.

42 The width of my stiles is a fat $3/16''$. I thought $1/4''$ was just to wide. If you are buying your wood buy strip-wood $3/16''$ wide. I've cut two stiles, will cut two more. You are going to have a front and back to your cabinet door with the wire mesh between.

43 Measure between the stiles for the rails (the horizontal part of a cabinet door). I cut my rails just shy of $13/16''$ to make sure I have space to open and close my door.

44 I have four stiles and two pieces of $1/16''$ x $1/16''$. The $1/16''$ x $1/16''$ will be glued between the doors making the space for the wire mesh. The next photo shows the stiles and rails to make a front and back cabinet door. (Ignore the shorter $1/16''$ x $1/16''$ on the bottom. You will cut them when the door is further along.)



45 Glue the rails between the stiles for the front and back. Glue the 1/16" x 1/16" long pieces onto the stiles. Glue them so that the outside edges are even.

46 Then measure and cut pieces of the 1/16" x 1/16" to fit between the longer pieces on the sides. Make sure all the edges are even.

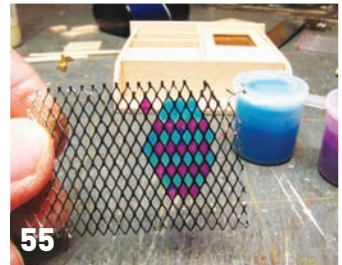
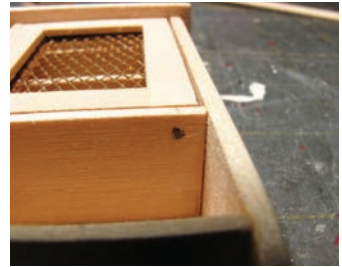
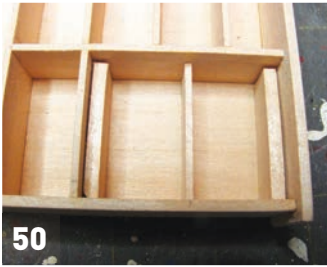
47 I painted my wire a brassy color and cut

it to fit inside the frame I made with the 1/16" x 1/16" strip wood.

48 Glue the other cabinet frame onto of this assembly. If you have clamps you may use them, just be careful to not mark the surface of the doors.

49 To help keep the door steady I cut a couple of pieces of scrap wood the same width as my shelf, 7/16". I've set my door into place.

50 With pin hinges you need to have the pins the same distance from the edges at top and bottom. If the pins are not in the same place the door will have trouble opening and certainly not open straight. The door will be wonky. So we measure but we have a top that extends beyond the rest of the cabinet, problem number one. Measure not more than an 1/8" away from the side or front and make a mark. I usually measure 3/32".



51 Remember the top extends 1/8" beyond the body of the cabinet. Add that on and make your marks.

52 I am using a "T" pin to start my hole before I drill. Problem number 2 is that I have a shelf to drill around. I have tried make cabinets leaving the problem parts off until I fit the pin hinge and that certainly could have been done here. I usually can get around this and set the pin.

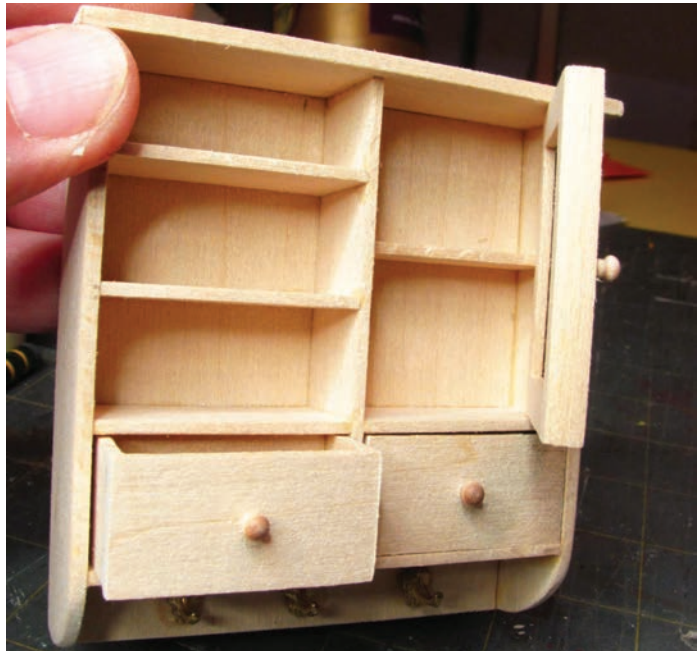
53 I cut straight pins off and use them for my hinges.

54 I drilled holes for my wooden knobs and glued them in. I used super

glue, medium thickness to glue on the metal hooks.

55 If you like add some stained glass paint to your mesh.

Stain or paint your new cabinet and hang it up in your dollhouse or room box! See more of my work at <http://1inchminisbykris.blogspot.com>.



Santa mug

Sculpt a cheerful Santa mug for your mini hot chocolate

BY RINA VELLICHOR



MEET THE MAKER: Rina Vellichor

"I live in St. Petersburg, Russia with my husband, Ilya, and two cats, Bunny and Dude. I have been a miniature artist since 2015. If a fortune-teller had told me 5 years ago that I would work as a miniaturist, I wouldn't believe her. An office, computer and dirty dishes were my daily routine, but one piece of orange polymer clay changed my life. Miniature art is my calling, my passion, and my addiction."



Making this mini Santa mug will certainly get you in the holiday spirit!

1 Cut out the details from the red polymer clay as shown in the photo. Attach the details of the mug to the chopstick and smooth the joints with a rubber shaper and wet wipe.

2 Using the cutter, cut a circle out of Flesh clay and fold its bottom edge towards the middle as shown in the photo. Attach it to the mug and make a vertical indentation in the middle of the folded edge. Insert two balls of clay into the indentation: nose and chin. Smooth the edges with a rubber shaper and wet wipe. Make holes for the eyes.

3 Insert the black microbeads into the eye sockets. Add wrinkles with a needle at the corners of the eyes if you like. Using a brush, apply some red soft pastels to Santa's cheeks,

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Polymer clay - red, white, green and Flesh - optional: glitter white clay
- Black micro beads
- Wooden chopsticks without varnish
- Red soft pastels
- Round cutters of different diameters
- Craft knife
- Polymer clay tools: rubber shaper, dotting tool, etc.
- UV top coat, gloss varnish or translucent cold enamel
- Wet wipes

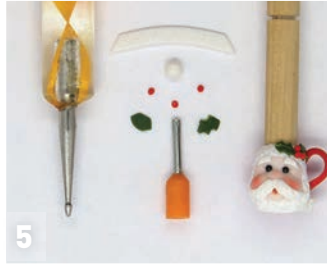
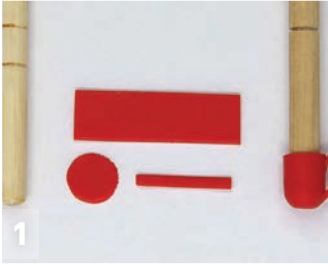
TOPTIP:

Important! The baked mug can be easily removed from the chopstick while it is still hot. **Caution!** Don't touch the hot wood with your bare hands. If the mug is difficult to remove, then it must be heated again in the oven.

nose and mouth as shown in the photo.

4 Cut out the beard, mustache and eyebrows

PROJECT



as shown. Attach the details to the mug and add some texture with the stylus tool.

5 Cut out details for fur from white or glitter white clay. Attach the details to the mug and add texture with the stylus tool. Cut green clay holly leaves with a craft knife and cutter. Attach the leaves to the cap. You can add some hot melt glue or liquid clay for a stronger bond. Roll up three small balls of red clay and attach them to the leaves.

6 Bake the mug in the oven at the temperature recommended by the clay manufacturer. If you plan to use cold enamel, apply it to the surface with a brush before baking.

7 Sand the inside of the baked mug if you plan to leave it empty. If you are going to fill it with a drink, then you can skip this step.

8 Cover the finished mug with a clear UV top nail coat or gloss varnish. If you used cold enamel, skip

this step or cover only the inside of the mug.

Congratulations! Santa's Christmas mug is ready to be added to your holiday scene! Be sure to visit <https://www.etsy.com/shop/RinaVellichor> to see more of my work.



Gina's picks from Instagram



Hello! I'm Gina Theesfield, a proud part of the Social Media team for AM. Like all of you, I am a miniature lover, so I'm thrilled to be highlighting some of the spectacular Instagram pages that catch my eye. You will be sure to be inspired by their miniature art.



Shepherdminiatures

Absolutely meticulous attention to detail from shoes to fabric bolts.

Wodeceramics

Stunningly beautiful miniature wheel thrown ceramics.



Albertisusy

Spectacular mastery of miniature 1:12 clothing.

Visit Gina on Instagram at [calico_garden](#)

Curling ribbon

By Jo Bevilacqua

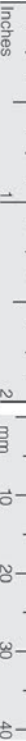


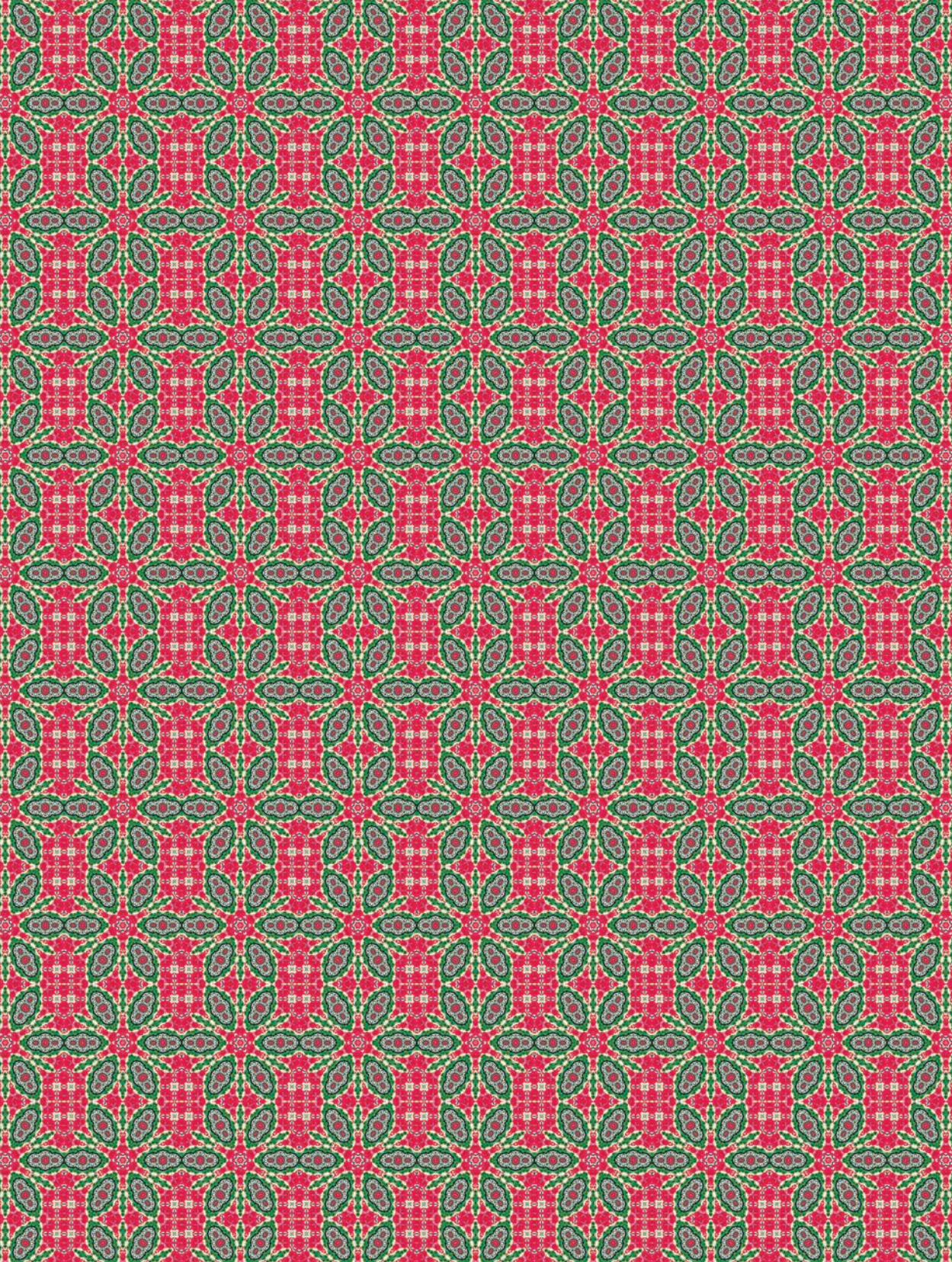
Wire ribbon can easily be curled with a pen after it is attached to your Christmas tree!

Happy Holidays!

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Holiday cards, tags, advent calendar and wrapping paper.
Pattern on next page donated by etsy.com/shop/ArtsyMiniatures.





Shopping bag

Bring home the mini groceries in this cute bag

BY JILL MUNDY

This little bag has been knitted, not with string but in a type of raffia, that comes in some very pretty colors. Also the size of your knitting needles determines the size of the holes in your bag, so for a real string-like bag use a slightly larger needle.

The bag

Cast on 10sts.

Row 1: Knit

Row 2: Purl

Row 3: Increase in first two stitches by knitting into front and back of stitch; K6;

Increase in last two stitches as before. (14 sts)

Row 4: Purl

Row 5: Knit

Row 6: Purl

Row 7: In crease in first stitch; K12; Increase in last stitch. (16sts)

Row 8: Purl

Starting with a Knit row, stocking stitch next 8 rows (Knit one row, Purl one row)

Row 17: Knit

Row 18: Knit

Row 19: Purl

Row 20: Purl

Cast off knitwise.

Repeat for other side of the bag.

Making up

Place sides of bag right-sides together and stitch close to edge or over sew with matching thread.

Turn right-side out.

Handles

Thread a large-eyed needle with a length of Raffia yarn (approx 15 inches/22 cms) Attach to bag 1/3 along from seam, just below casting off row.

Take the needle through 1/3 from other seam but do not pull tight. Use a pencil or your little finger to keep a loop the desired length of the handle.

Secure the loop with a small stitch then take thread back to starting



point and secure with another small stitch, keeping loop to match the first. Repeat once or twice more then starting at one side of handle, cover looped threads with button-hole stitch, sliding stitches together to make handle firm. Finish off.

Alternatively handles or straps can be made from lengths of narrow ribbon. Repeat on other side of bag to match.

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- 1 x card DMC Fantasy
Raffia
- Pair size 1.5mm or 2mm
needles



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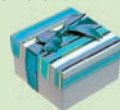
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A shabby chic Christmas

A one-inch scale room box by Denise Morales is decorated for the season

BY DENISE MORELS

I had already completed two 1:24 scale room boxes in the traditional red and green Christmas colors a few years previous to this box. I had always wanted to do a Christmas themed box with pinks and sage greens, so when a fellow club member brought in a shabby Christmas table

that I admired so much, I knew that I wanted to bump this themed room box up on my long list of miniature projects. I hope you enjoy this miniature Christmas shop that's full of imagined shabby chic items!

The large bookcase/fireplace unit was initially a

challenge to decorate. I was able to unify the unit by first placing old books on the shelves and then adding all of the Christmas Santas, snowmen, angels, nutcrackers, and ornaments. It was further unified with the placement of the evergreens and the icicle trim, made by True2Scale.





The Christmas trees, nutcrackers, nativity and angels are all metal miniatures and the Santa is an inexpensive plastic piece. The following technique is what I use to paint almost

all plastic, resin and metal mini pieces. First, I spray them with white primer, then wash with Folk Art antique medium, then paint with acrylics, then wash again with the antique medium,

then coat with Mod Podge.

The "NOEL" decoration is a kit from Robin Betterly. I made the wreath in the picture frame by shaping a heart with cloth covered wire, then layering with leaves cut



Right: Metal miniatures can be painted to fit the scene.

with a leaf punch, then glued no-hole glitter beads on top.

To make the star/snowman garland, I covered star confetti with no-hole beads, glued no-hole beads around Santa and snowman millefiori, then glued these on a string. The snowflakes are punched from scrapbook paper and the glittered star and flower confetti are glued in the center.

Christmas trees are made from cut, shaped and painted bump chenille pipe cleaners with glittered stars and no-hole beads glued inside the branches. Poinsettias are made



from a Bonnie Lavish kit and I used the leaves to make the paler flower. Hand mirrors were a club project that were inspired by ones made by Lori Potts. The flowers on the metal mirrors are nail decals.

The perfect stocking was made by Paulette Svec. The laser cut Santas were a kit from Cynthia Howe. I then glittered the Merry Christmas confetti sign.

All of the Santas, snowmen, and churches are metal minis, plastic, or porcelain blanks painted in the same way that I described earlier. The angel on top of the books is by Valerie Casson.

Swag garland is made from green floral wire, different colored landscaping foam, no-hole beads and glittered pearl beads with glued on gold seed beads.

Some inexpensive plastic skates were painted with a pearlescent white, embellished with bunka, lace, paper punched flowers, and gold beads to make them fancy.



Well, I guess I have a little bit of everything on the Chrysnbon mannequin. I had so many ideas and such little space that I had to combine fancy Christmas jewelry with a workday Christmas apron. I even threw in some ornaments and a vase for the mannequin's head. The gift wrapping station is probably

my favorite part of this room box. The silk ribbon ornaments hanging on string were another wonderful group project that took about four weekly meetings to complete.

The bulletin board that displays gift wrapping embellishments was a lot of fun to make because I got to use bits and pieces from my stash.

The Christmas bulbs and tree topper are from the craft store and were clear plastic before I painted them with some Pearl Ex powdered pigments and water.

I used metallic sewing thread to make the curled ribbon around the cards. Ric Rac trim is glued around a paper cone and a toothpick was glued into a round wooden flat bead to make the base. The pink crochet wreath is from Paulette Svec and I furthered embellished it with beads, bunka, and a bow. Rhinestones and glitter embellish a plain pink bead. The three center snowmen are metal minis and the two end ones are made from Shrinky Dinks paper.

Shoes for St. Nicholas Day are painted and flocked metal clogs filled with purchased



sliced millefiori canes (candy sticks made with twisted embroidery floss that is hardened with liquid super glue). Suitcase-stacked wooden discs glued together, sanded

on bottom and covered with 1/2" scale paper from Robin Betterley.

Paulette Svec taught a snow people class and she also crocheted the pillow. I printed





the black and white pillows onto ink jet fabric paper. I bought the crocheted Santa at a show. The angels are made from plastic bottles and embellished with lace, trims and beads. I got the idea for these from life size ones when I was looking at a blog site.

The three center Santas are porcelain blanks that I painted with acrylics and the two other Santas are made with Shrinky Dinks ink jet paper. The pinecones are from a tutorial from Lesley Shepherd's. The stationery was inspired by something I saw in a Spanish magazine.

The metal mini shoes on the table were painted then flocked with pink glitter flocking. The jewelry on the green flocked display is made with millefiori, string and no-hole beads. When I was cleaning up my workroom,

Right: Snow people were from a class by Paulette Svec.



after I completed this project, I found lots of odds and ends. So, I decided to make a needle-

point canvas basket and filled it with the miscellany. I am very happy with this piece!



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